



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Invitation to Negotiate

Instructions to Potential Bidders

Remploy ES (Including Work Choice Contract)

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29th January 2015

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INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION ON TENDERING PROCEDURES

7. General Information

- 7.1 Please note that, unless otherwise indicated, references to the “Authority” or to “DWP” throughout these documents mean the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions acting as part of the Crown through his/her representatives in the Department for Work and Pensions. References to “Potential Bidder” means any person or organisation responding or, where the context requires, potentially responding to this Invitation to Negotiate (ITN)
- 1.2 These instructions, together with the specification and all other information and documents to which they refer, are designed to ensure that all tenders are given equal and fair consideration. It is important, therefore, that you provide all the information asked for in the format and order specified.
- 1.3 This document contains the information and instructions Potential Bidders need to submit a completed tender, for example:
- Information regarding the procurement, such as the timetable, specific conditions of contract, evaluation process and award/evaluation criteria
 - How to submit questions and requests for clarification
 - Instructions explaining how to complete and submit a bid
- 1.4 Please read the information and instructions carefully because non-compliance with the instructions may result in disqualification of your tender from this procurement.
- 1.5 The Terms and Conditions form an integral part of this ITN and will apply throughout this procurement. They set out further rights and obligations which apply to the Authority and successful bidders.
- 1.6 Potential Bidders need to ensure that they have read all the documentation contained within this ITN (Specification, Background Information, Terms and Conditions and these Instructions) thoroughly so that questions or clarifications are not raised unnecessarily.
- 1.7 All Potential Bidders need to be aware that 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 Authority may disclose within Government any of the Potential Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Potential Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Potential Bidder to the Authority during this procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Central Government and their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies.

- 1.8 The Authority actively encourages Potential Bidders to utilise SMEs (where relevant to do so and provides value for money) within their supply chains. Please see [relevant](#) section of this document for more detailed information regarding the Authority's approach to engaging with SMEs.

2. Administration of the Procurement Process

- 2.1 The Authority will be administering the procurement process electronically via the [DWP e-Procurement Solution \(ePS\)](#) portal. No hard copy documents will be issued and all communications with the Authority (including final submission of tenders) will be conducted via the DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal.
- 2.2 To ensure all communications relating to this procurement are received the Potential Bidder must ensure that the point of contact it nominates in the DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal is accurate at all times. Access to the Portal is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year anywhere in the world via the internet unless notified otherwise by the DWP e-Procurement Solution portal.
- 2.3 Support available to help you to understand and use the system includes:
- Freephone helpdesk (0800 368 4850), available Mon-Fri 8am to 6pm (UK time in English language only);
 - Help guides.
- 2.4 Potential Bidders must ensure that their DWP e-Procurement Solution registration directly relates to the part of the Bidder organisation that submits the tender (i.e. some larger Bidders may have several subsidiaries so registration needs to apply to that part of organisation responsible for this particular requirement).
- 2.5 Where a consortium/Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) is formed to submit a tender, this must only be submitted by and in the name of the Bidder chosen as the "Lead" Bidder for that consortium/SPV.
- 2.6 Where a consortium/SPV is formed one of its members should be nominated to lead the tender process. If the consortia/SPV legally exists, then the consortia/SPV should lead and complete the tender in its name and 'voice'. If the consortia/SPV does not yet exist then it should nominate a lead member to complete the tender.
- 2.7 The lead member will then be treated as the "Potential Bidder" by the Authority for the purposes of this tender and to communicate with the consortium/SPV.
- 2.8 Where there is a change of Bidder chosen to "lead" a consortium/SPV PRIOR to tender submission, the new lead Bidder must register on the DWP e-Procurement Solution portal and the previous lead Bidder should immediately "decline" their option to submit a tender.
- 2.9 Please note that the Authority will require the consortium/SPV to form a single legal entity for the purpose of concluding the contract.

- 2.10 Should you have any queries with accessing the portal, please contact DWP e-Procurement Solution's dedicated Bidder helpdesk by calling 0800 368 4850 or by emailing: help@bravosolution.co.uk.

3. Conditions Applying to this Negotiation

- 3.1 It is the Authorities intention that this Competitive Procurement Exercise will comply with the overriding EU Procurement Directive principles for open and transparent competition to ensure value for money.

Authority's Terms and Conditions

- 3.2 Potential Bidders are not permitted to submit their own terms and conditions, whether standard or otherwise and no material amendments which alter the balance of commercial risk, legal risk or any other type of risk between the Authority and the Potential Bidder, to the Authorities terms and conditions will be considered. Please see technical response envelope (Annex R) should you wish to propose non-material changes to the Terms and Conditions.

Costs and Expenses

- 3.3 Potential Bidders will not be entitled to claim from the Authority any costs or expenses which may be incurred in preparing and/or submitting it's bid.
- 3.4 This applies whether or not the Bidder or any other organisation is successful and also applies to any additional cost a Potential Bidder may incur if the Authority modifies or amends its requirements or if the Authority cancels this procurement for whatever reason.

Confidentiality

- 3.5 All information supplied by the Authority to you must be treated in confidence and not disclosed to third parties other than is necessary to obtain sureties or quotations for the purpose of submitting this tender. All information supplied by you to the Authority will similarly be treated in confidence except: -
- I. For the disclosure of such information with regard to the outcome of the procurement process as may be required to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union in accordance with EU Directives or elsewhere in accordance with the requirements of UK government policy on the disclosure of information relating to government contracts;
 - II. That as part of the debriefing process we will inform any eliminated tenderer, who has made an admissible tender, of the characteristics

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and relative advantages of the successful tender(s), as well as, where appropriate, the qualitative evaluation score(s) achieved by and name(s) of the successful tenderer(s);

III. In pursuance of the Authority's statutory obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations or the UK Government's requirements on transparency;

IV. That references may be sought from banks, existing or past clients, or other referees submitted by the tenderer.

- 3.6 The Potential Bidder acknowledges and agrees that all Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government and that they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure; and 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.
- 3.7 For the purposes mentioned at paragraph above, the Authority may disclose within Government any of the Potential Bidder's documentation/information (including any that the Potential Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive, such as specific bid information) submitted by the Potential Bidder to the Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government

Contract Period

- 3.8 The contract will be for the period 2 years unless terminated by the Authority in accordance with the terms of the contract

Potential Bidder Visits (where appropriate)

- 3.9 Where it is anticipated that the Authority's premises are to be used for the delivery of the contract the Authority will arrange site visits for all Potential Bidders who wish to visit the locations concerned.

Amendments to the Tender Process or Tender Documents by the Authority

- 3.10 The Authority reserves the right to vary the tender process and/or amend the tender documents (including this ITN Instructions to Potential Bidders document) at any time prior to the deadline for receipt of tenders. Any

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such amendment will be numbered, dated and issued by the Authority via the DWP e-Procurement Solution portal. Where amendments are significant, the Authority may at its discretion extend the deadline for receipt of tenders.

- 3.11 The Authority reserves the right to discontinue this tendering process at any time and not to award a contract.

Previous or current contracts with DWP

- 3.12 Potential Bidders who currently undertake, or have previously undertaken, work for DWP should note that the tender will be evaluated purely on their response to this ITN. DWP's prior knowledge or experience of organisations will not form part of the evaluation.

Inducements

- 3.13 Offering an inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining this or any other contract with the Authority will disqualify your tender from being considered and may constitute a criminal offence.

Collusion

- 3.14 Please note that qualification envelope of the ITN contains a "Certificate of Bona Fide Tendering". If you answer NO to question 1 you must complete annex C so you can demonstrate to the Authority that adequate remedial action has been implemented. If you answer NO to any other question under Bona Fide Tendering your tender will not be evaluated.

Potential Bidder Clarification (Q&A)

- 3.15 Potential Bidders have the opportunity to raise questions about the ITN and request clarification about the requirement. All questions raised must be submitted via the [DWP e-Procurement Solution](#) portal.
- 3.16 The Question and Answer log will be published on the DWP e-Procurement Solution portal and updated regularly. It will be the responsibility of the Potential Bidder to monitor the portal for the latest activity.
- 3.17 The last date for the submission of questions along with the date of the publication of the final Q&A log on the DWP e-Procurement Solution portal is shown in the procurement timetable.
- 3.18 The final date for questions and answers and dissemination allows sufficient time for Potential Bidders to impact this information before finalising their tenders for submission.
- 3.19 If a question is deemed by a Potential Bidder to be commercially confidential, then the Bidder should indicate that they believe this is the

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case. The Authority will consider this and if in agreement, will exercise due discretion in handling the question and limiting the circulation of the answer(s) to your organisation.

- 3.20 Questions not deemed to be commercially confidential will be considered by the Authority to be of significance to all Potential Bidders. All questions and answers will be made anonymous and made available to all Potential Bidders via the [DWP e-Procurement Solution](#) portal. If the Authority intends to follow this course of action it will inform you before sharing the question and response with all Potential Bidders which will provide you with an opportunity for the question to be withdrawn.

Acceptance and Return of Tenders

- 3.21 By issuing the ITN the Authority is not bound in any way and does not have to accept any tender.
- 3.22 The tender, comprising of the information set out in the ITN must be completed and submitted in its entirety to the DWP e-Procurement Solution portal by the stipulated deadline.
- 3.23 Tenders will remain unopened until the deadline for receipt has passed and then they will be opened and logged in accordance with DWP procurement procedures. The tenders will undergo an initial compliance check to ensure that all information requested has been received. Tenders will be rejected if the complete information requested is not included as part of the tender documentation.

Declaration by Potential Bidder (Technical Envelope)

- 3.24 This document is your offer to enter into a contract with the Authority. It is the responsibility of the Potential Bidder to ensure that your final submission corresponds with the information stated on this Declaration Statement as this will form the basis of your tender proposal.
- 3.25 This document should also act as a final checklist to confirm that you have submitted all of the required responses. To ensure equality of treatment for all Potential Bidders you must return all of the information required to enable a full evaluation of your tender to take place. If any of the documents are missing at tender opening stage your tender will be classed as non-compliant and will not be evaluated resulting in your disqualification from the procurement exercise.
- 3.26 You will note that this document requires a scanned signature and if your proposal is successful then a “wet signature” will be required at contract award stage.

Period for which Tenders shall Remain Valid

- 3.27 Tenders shall remain valid and capable of acceptance for 180 days from the closing date for receipt of tenders.

Variant Proposals

- 3.28 Variant proposals will not be accepted unless otherwise stated in the Contract Notice.

Welsh Language

- 3.29 Where appropriate Potential Bidders should be aware that if the contract delivers a service to members of the public in Wales then the Potential Bidder must comply with and fully understand their contractual obligations regarding the DWP Welsh Language Scheme. Full details can be found in the Welsh Language Scheme Contract Schedule and further details found by accessing [‘A guide for DWP Contractors when delivering services to DWP customers in Wales’](#) .

Tax Compliance (ITN- Qualification Envelope)

- 3.30 Potential Bidders bidding for government contracts are required to self-certify their tax compliance for all procurements which have or likely to have a value of £5million or over. Potential Bidders are not required to certify on behalf of any subcontractor or any other members of the supply chain.
- 3.31 Where a Potential Bidder has declared occasions of non-compliance they will also need to provide details of any mitigating factors, such as the measures that have been implemented to ensure future tax compliance.
- 3.32 Please note that the Authority may disqualify a Potential Bidder from participating in a procurement process if it has not fulfilled its tax obligations under UK law or the relevant State in which the Potential Bidder is established.

Potential Bidders Past Performance (ITN – Qualification Envelope)

- 3.33 Under EU Directive 2004/18/EC and the Public Contract Regulations 2006 the authority is entitled to establish minimum standards of technical or professional ability (including minimum standards for reliability based on past performance) which must be met by Potential Bidders.
- 3.34 The Government has developed a new approach to ensure that previous performance by Potential Bidders can be taken into account and robustly assessed prior to entering into new contracts. This will give the Government (and thereby the authority) confidence, based on past performance, that those bidders awarded contracts will perform them satisfactorily in accordance with the authorities terms.
- 3.35 Potential Bidders must provide a list of contracts of goods and/or services provided over the last 3 years that are comparable to the authorities’ requirement and obtain a “Certificate of Performance” from each of those customers. If for some reason a customer is unwilling to provide a “Certificate of Performance” there is a facility to “self-certify”. These

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certificates must be uploaded as part of your tender response and the reason provided as to why self-certification is required.

- 3.36 During assessment of a Potential Bidders technical and professional ability, the authority will take into account any failure to discharge obligations under previous relevant contracts when assessing whether the specified minimum standards for reliability for such contracts were met.
- 3.37 “Minimum Standards” means the minimum standards for reliability as set out in the OJEU Notice reference (insert OJEU Notice reference here)
- 3.38 The authority will verify a random selection of certificates, particularly in cases of “self-certification”.
- 3.39 The approach to evaluation of “past performance” and the verification process of the “certificates of performance” will be detailed in the evaluation section of this documentation.
- 3.40 If Potential Bidders are bidding as part of a Consortium/SPV – the Authority will require ‘certificates of performance’ to enable the past performance of those members of the consortium to be evaluated and establish if they pass the minimum standards for reliability.
- 3.41 If Potential Bidders are using sub-contractors to deliver a significant element of this contract “certificates of performance” must also be obtained from those customers with whom the sub-contractors have done business with in the last 3 years.
- 3.42 In addition, the authority will re-assess reliability based on past performance before key points in the procurement process (i.e. short listing, preferred bidder, conclusion of contract etc). Potential Bidders will accordingly be asked to update the evidence they provide in relation to past performance to reflect more recent performance on new or existing contracts (or to confirm that nothing has changed).

4. Data Security

Draft Security Plan – (ITN – Technical Envelope & Annex E)

- 4.1 Cabinet Office has introduced mandatory requirements relating to data handling, security and information assurance in government contracts. Information must be protected, together with systems, equipment and processes which support its use. Our contractors must provide an appropriate level of security.
- 4.2 Potential Bidders (whether for a contract or place on a framework) are required to submit a Draft Security Plan detailing how you will comply with the DWP Security Policy for Contractors, which includes compliance with ISO/IEC27001 and Cyber Essentials Scheme. A copy of this

document can be found on '[Gov UK – Other DWP procurement and policy documents](#)' and full guidance is provided in the relevant document and in schedule 6 of the DWP Standard Terms and Conditions. A full Security Plan will be due 20 days after contract award.

Off-shoring – (ITN Technical Envelope & Annex F)

7.1 In accordance with the DWP Offshoring Policy, prior written consent from DWP must be sought where Potential Bidders (and/or their sub-contractors) are proposing to host or access Departmental systems, services or official information outside of the United Kingdom, or to bring foreign nationals to the United Kingdom to provide services in delivery of the Contract.

7.1 Potential Bidders must be aware of this and must submit an application for approval together with their tender. Where DWP gives consent, the Potential Bidder shall comply with any reasonable instructions notified to it by DWP in relation to the Authority Data in question. More information can be found in the document A Guide to DWP Offshoring Policy which can be found on '[Gov UK – Other DWP procurement and policy documents](#)'.

Baseline Security Standard (Part of Terms and Conditions).

4.5 Where contractors staff are to be given access to Authority's assets (defined as premises, systems, information or data) the attention of Potential Bidders is drawn to their contractual obligation. Full details of the actions required to comply with the above procedures, can be found in the guidance document 'HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard – A Guide for DWP Contractors'. A PDF version of this document can be viewed at: '[Gov UK - Other DWP procurement and policy documents](#)'.

4.6 Contractors' staff working in Northern Ireland will be required to be cleared via the Access NI procedures, more information can be obtained at www.dojni.gov.uk/accessni. A copy of this document in Microsoft Word format can be provided on request. Please note that Potential Bidders are expected to meet any costs this may involve.

5. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) - (ITN Technical Envelope)

5.1 Your attention is drawn to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). It is the Authority's view that TUPE is likely to be applicable if this ITN results in a Contract being placed. Nevertheless, it is your responsibility to consider whether or not TUPE applies in the individual circumstances of your tender, particularly if you are proposing to submit an innovative tender.

6. Freedom of Information Act - (ITN Technical Envelope & Annex Q)

6.1 The Authority is committed to open government and to meeting its legal responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All

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information submitted to the Authority may need to be disclosed by the Authority in response to a request under the Act. If you consider that any of the information included in your tender is commercially sensitive, please identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm may result from disclosure if a request is received, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity.

- 6.2 You should be aware that even where you have indicated that information is commercially sensitive, the Authority may be required to disclose it under the terms of the Act if a request is received. Please note that the receipt of material marked 'confidential' or equivalent by the Authority should not be taken to mean that the Authority accepts any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking. If a request is received, the Authority may also be required to disclose details to unsuccessful tenderers.

7. Procurement Timetable

- 7.1 Set out below is the proposed procurement timetable. This is intended as a **guide** and, whilst the Authority does not intend to depart significantly from it, there may be occasions especially around obtaining Ministerial Approval where the timetable will be subject to minor change.

Activity	Date
Publication of the ITN to all Potential Bidders (Drop 1)	28 th October 2014
Publication of the ITN to all Potential Bidders (Drop 2)	11 th November 2014
First Q&A log published	14 th November 2014
Receipt of First ITN response	1 st December 2014
Evaluate First ITN responses	8 th December 2014
Negotiation meetings (see detailed timeline)	8 th December 2014 – 5 th January 2015
Receipt of Second ITN response	5 th January 2015
Negotiation Meetings (see detailed timeline)	6 th January 2015 - 23 rd January 2015
Final date for questions	3 rd February 2015
Final Q&A published	6 th February 2015
BAFO deadline	13 th February 2015
Go Live	1 st April 2015

8. Tender Submission Process

Background

- 8.1 The DWP e-Procurement Solution portal relies on the completion of 3 envelopes which will contain all of the information the Authority requires to enable full evaluation to take place. All information should be uploaded as per instructions into the relevant envelopes on the DWP e-Procurement Solution portal.

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- Qualification Envelope – Is used for gathering information to qualify Potential Bidders for further evaluation
- Technical Envelope – Is used for gathering information to allow for full evaluation of the technical side of the proposal
- Commercial Envelope – Is used to gather the Pricing Proposal

Tender Completion

- 8.2 The information or text contained within the ITN (including its Annexes) and your response, any variation of them and any formal interchange of correspondence or information, may be incorporated, whether by reference or otherwise, into any subsequent contract/framework agreement that the Authority may enter into as a result of this ITN.
- 8.3 To participate in this procurement, Potential Bidders are required to submit a fully compliant tender and must answer all questions accurately and concisely as possible. Only information provided in response to the ITN will be evaluated. To ensure equality of treatment of all Potential Bidders the Authority reserves the right to reject any non compliant tender.
- 8.4 You should answer all questions using the templates provided, presenting them in the same sequence and using the same references. Please ensure all answers are self contained with no cross-referencing. Only information entered into the appropriate answer boxes (which may be extended as necessary but should not exceed any applicable word limit/page count) or in additional documents supplied as requested will be taken into consideration for the purposes of evaluating the tender.
- 8.5 Responses must not exceed the pre-set margins and space allocation. In some cases the Authority may put a page limit on your response to some or all questions. These limits are provided in the Invitation to Negotiate document and any response in excess of these allocations will be disregarded and will not be evaluated.
- 8.6 Therefore, bullets, tables, graphs and charts in support of your responses are all permitted. Responses must be presented using Arial font size 12 (English Language and black typeface) this includes instances where information may be tabulated as part of the response. The only exception permitted is for illustrative screen shots, graphs and charts, which should be presented within the allocated page limit for the question they are relevant to and must not be embedded separately as this information will be disregarded.
- 8.7 Tenders must be completed using Microsoft Word and MS Excel 1997 – 2003 format. **Files submitted in Microsoft Project format and PDF will not be accepted.**

- 8.8 All acronyms and abbreviations, if used, must be fully explained.
- 8.9 Where a YES, NO or Not Applicable response is required, please click the appropriate YES, NO or Not Applicable statement on the drop down options bar

Tender Submission Procedure

- 8.10 The ITN and any attachments have been specifically designed to be compatible with DWP e-tendering and e-evaluation requirements and must not, under any circumstance, be altered.
- 8.11 All tenders must be submitted to the Authority using the DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal. Tenders submitted by any other means will not be accepted.
- 8.12 A tender may be completed and submitted at any time before the tender submission deadline using the DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal. Instructions explaining how to submit and complete the tender to the Authority are located within the e-Sourcing Portal.
- 8.13 The Potential Bidder is responsible for ensuring that its tender has been successfully completed and all information uploaded to the DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal prior to the tender submission deadline.
- 8.14 Please allow sufficient time to submit your tender, it is recommended that the Potential Bidder allows time for a final check to be undertaken prior to the submission deadline. It will not be possible for you to upload any further information after the tender submission deadline. IT problems within your own system will not be considered reasonable grounds for late submission.
- 8.15 A Potential Bidder may modify and resubmit its tender at any time prior to the tender submission deadline. Tenders cannot be modified by Potential Bidders after the tender submission deadline. Upon the tender submission deadline, the Potential Bidder must ensure that it has only submitted a single tender through the DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal.
- 8.16 Financial information should be submitted in the format requested (usually MS Excel). Documents which have related financial information should be submitted in GBP (£). Instructions on the DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal will clearly identify the format and where these documents should be uploaded.

Labelling your Tender Forms (File Names)

- 8.17 Potential Bidders will be invited to submit responses to online questions and upload a suite of documentation that reflect the requirements of the

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ITN. It is vitally important that when using the DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal Potential Bidders correctly name any documents and attachments that are required to be uploaded as a response to questions within each of the envelopes..

- **Qualification Envelope**

- 8.18 This envelope contains questions the Potential Bidder may have already answered in setting up their organisation Profile and the answers to those questions will be used to pre-populate your response.
- 8.19 Potential Bidders may change these answers so they differ from those saved in their Organisation Profile and save those new answers on their response. These answers will be applied back to their Organisation Profile when the ITN is evaluated by the Buyer.
- 8.20 Potential Bidders may also supply different answers to these questions in other ITN's they submit. In this case the response saved to your Organisation Profile will always be the response which was most recently evaluated by the Buyer.
- 8.21 Where Potential Bidders do not want to change any information they will be given a prompt to confirm that everything recorded is current and correct.
- 8.22 Where there is a requirement to upload documents within the envelope, the suggested format is as follows. Please note this is an example and your submission should reflect what is requested in ITN.

ITN Response required	How your response should be uploaded
Financial and Economic Standing (Regulation 24) Annex D	Contract title (i.e. supply of widgets), Annex D - Financial & Economic Standing (Because of the complexity of financial accounts you do not have to use the Annex D provided as long as the uploaded documents are labelled Annex D) 2010/2011 accounts Company Name (i.e. ABC Ltd) 2011/2012 accounts Company Name (i.e. ABC Ltd)

- **Technical Envelope**

- 8.23 This envelope contains specific questions to which a response is required. It is this information which will enable the Authority to carry out a qualitative evaluation of the proposal. Where there is a requirement to

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upload attachments to questions within this envelope the suggested format is as follows.

ITN Response required	How your response should be uploaded
Draft Security Plan Annex E – Draft Security Plan (Pre-populated by Remploy)	Contract title (i.e. supply of widgets) Annex E - Draft Security Plan Company Name (i.e. ABC Ltd)

- **Commercial Envelope**

8.24 This envelope is where the Pricing Proposal should be uploaded. This information should be uploaded as follows.

ITN Response required	How your response should be uploaded
Pricing Proposal Commercial Envelope, Annex S – Pricing Proposal	Contract title (i.e. supply of widgets), Annex S – Pricing Proposal Company Name (i.e. ABC Ltd)

Deadline for Submission of Tenders

8.25 All tenders must be received by the Authority by the tender submission deadline which is shown in the procurement timetable.

8.26 To ensure that all Potential Bidders are treated fairly tenders received after the tender submission deadline may be rejected by the Authority. The decision whether to reject a tender received after the tender submission deadline is made entirely at the Authority's discretion.

8.27 A Potential Bidder may withdraw from this procurement by choosing not to submit a tender by the tender submission deadline. It would be useful to the department if you can advise us in advance that you will not be submitting a proposal and if possible the reasons behind your decision.

Additional Materials, Documents and Attachments

8.28 No additional documentation should be submitted with a tender unless specifically requested by the Authority

8.29 Information that forms part of general company literature or promotional brochures will not form part of the evaluation process and should not be submitted.

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- 8.30 The tender should not contain any inserted, pasted or embedded pictures or documents (image files, Adobe Acrobat documents or other Word documents) unless specifically requested by the Authority
- 8.31 Any additional documents requested by the Authority must be clearly referenced within the body of the tender using a unique, un-ambiguous and relevant file name. They must be saved using MS Word (in Web Page, filtered format only), MS Excel, MS Power Point, Adobe Acrobat or jpeg formats. No other file formats should be used.

Subcontractors and Consortia

- 8.32 It is important that the tender is completed accurately to enable the Authority to establish a full understanding of the proposed approach to provision of the requirement.
- 8.33 The tender must be completed in the name of the economic operator (typically a company or similar legal entity) that will ultimately enter into a contract with the Authority and therefore assumes liability for performance of the contract.
- 8.34 With the exception of subcontractors identified in Annexes A & I of the tender response, no organisation other than the Potential Bidder will be able to provide services through the contract, whether group company, subsidiary, parent company, holding company, associated company, franchisor, fellow franchisee, strategic partner or organisation in any other relationship whatsoever. For the avoidance of doubt, the use of any kind of group companies associated with the Potential Bidder can be only as subcontractors identified in the ITN Response.
- 8.35 The Authority recognises that on occasions new subcontractors may be added to the supply chain. In these cases the Potential Bidder must seek approval from the Authority via the normal contract management procedures. Acceptance of the additional subcontractor will be at the Authority's discretion.
- 8.36 When responding to the Authority's questions in the tender, the Potential Bidder should give examples of its own experience and capability to demonstrate its ability to provide the services in accordance with the requirements of the ITN.
- 8.37 The Authority is happy to receive tenders from economic operators collaborating as a consortium or subcontracting elements of its obligations. Where one of these approaches is adopted the following guidance set out in this paragraph must be followed.
 - 8.37.1 Subcontracting proposals
 - a) If a Potential Bidder needs to rely on the capability and/or experience of one or more subcontractors in its tender to demonstrate the Potential Bidder's ability to provide the services in accordance with the requirements of the ITN it must inform the Authority in its tender. A Potential Bidder using this approach should indicate that it is a 'prime

contractor' for the purposes of responding to the relevant question(s) in the selection questionnaire.

- b) A Potential Bidder's tender must clearly identify in response to any question, when it is relying on a subcontractor, the name of the particular subcontractor and explain the subcontractor's capability and experience as the context of the question requires.
- c) The Authority does not require all subcontractors be disclosed. It only requires a Potential Bidder to disclose those subcontractors who directly contribute to the Potential Bidder's ability to meet its obligations under the contract. There is no need to specify those subcontractors providing general services to the Potential Bidder (such as window cleaners, lawyers, desktop software providers etc) that indirectly enable the Potential Bidder to perform the contract. For example if the Authority requires a Potential Bidder to hold a particular licence – then the Potential Bidder may indicate that 'XYZ Co' holds the licence and indicate that services covered by the scope of this licence will only be performed by its subcontractor 'XYZ Co'.

8.37.2 Consortium proposals

- a) If a group of economic operators wish to act jointly to provide the Services they may do so:

with all parties signing the resultant contract and assuming joint and several responsibility for performance of the contract. Please note that in accordance with Regulation 28 the Authority may require the consortium to form a single legal entity for the purpose of concluding the contract; **or**

using a separate entity (often referred to as a special purpose vehicle or "SPV") which will ultimately enter into the contract or with the Authority. Please note that if the SPV does not yet exist or has a limited trading history it is likely that the consortium members will need to nominate a guarantor for the SPV's performance of the contract.

- b) The consortium should nominate one of its members to lead the tendering process. If the SPV exists, then the SPV should lead and complete the tender in its name and 'voice'. If the SPV does not yet exist or the consortium plans to collaborate on a joint and several basis, then it should nominate a lead consortium member. The lead member will then be treated as the "Potential Bidder" by

the Authority for the purposes of this ITN and to communicate with the consortium.

- c) Where the Potential Bidder relies on the capability and/or experience of one or more consortium members in its tender to demonstrate the consortium's ability to provide the available services in accordance with the requirements of the ITN it must inform the Authority in its tender.
- d) A Potential Bidder's tender must clearly identify in response to any question, when it is relying on another consortium member, the name of the particular consortium member and explain the consortium member's capability and experience as the context of the question requires.

Changes to the Contracting Arrangements

8.38 The Authority recognises that arrangements in relation to consortia and subcontracting may be subject to occasional change. Potential Bidders should therefore respond in the light of such arrangements as are currently envisaged. Potential Bidders are reminded that any future change in relation to the consortium membership and subcontracting arrangements must be notified to the Authority at the earliest opportunity. The Authority will make a further assessment of the tender by applying the selection criteria and/or award criteria to the new information provided.

8.39 Merlin Standard

Potential Bidders need to be aware that they must attain the Merlin Standard, if not already held, where they have a supply chain within their delivery model for this contract. Potential Bidders will be assessed against the Merlin Standard by a third party organisation within a year of the contract go live and they must achieve accreditation within 1 year and every two years thereafter .

For further information on the Merlin Standard, please see:

<http://www.merlinstandard.co.uk/>
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/merlin-standard.pdf>; and
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/sub-contracting-merlin-guidance.pdf>

9. TENDER EVALUATION

Overview of the Evaluation Process

Remploy ES (including Work Choice) Instructions to Potential Bidders

- 9.1 All Competitive Procurements have both selection and award stages as defined in the Public Contract Regulations.
- 9.2 The Authority will undertake a selection appraisal of your organisation to satisfy itself that you are fundamentally eligible to tender. In this regard, the PQQ contained questions relating to mandatory and discretionary grounds for exclusion of Potential Bidders on the grounds of eligibility. In addition the information provided under Economic and Financial Standing will be subject to a financial risk assessment which also may give the department grounds to exclude you from further evaluation.
- 9.3 All compliant tenders who pass this initial selection stage will then be subject to separate Qualitative and Financial Evaluation.

Selection Appraisal

- 9.4 At the selection stage Potential Bidders are assessed against the following:
- a. Regulation 23, criteria for the rejection of economic operators;
 - b. Regulation 24, information as to the economic and financial standing;
 - c. Directive 2004/18/EC & the Public Contract Regulations 2006 (minimum standards for reliability based on past performance);
 - d. Public Contract Regulations 2006 (tax obligations).

Qualitative Evaluation (Award Stage)

- 9.5 Evaluators will assess responses to the questions in the ITN and will award scores based on the award criteria and sub-criteria set out in 9.10 and 9.11 of this guidance.

Financial Evaluation (Award Stage)

- 9.6 The financial evaluation will be based on the information provided in the financial proposal documentation and evaluated as the guidance shown in 9.12 and 9.13 of this guidance.
- 9.7 Financial evaluation will be undertaken by the Authority's finance team who are different evaluators to those individuals involved with the quality evaluation process.

Evaluation Summary Table

Response Heading	Marking Methodology
Whole Document	Compliance checks to ensure that tenders include all the relevant information requested as part of the ITN and that it has been submitted in the format required.
Preliminary Tender Compliance Check	

Please complete – Declaration by Potential Bidder	Tenders not meeting requirements will give the Authority grounds for exclusion for non-compliance.
Qualification Envelope	
Organisation and Contact Details	Not scored, but full information must be provided. Additionally <u>Annex A</u> must be completed if you will be sub-contracting part/all of the service or if you are tendering as part of a Consortium.
Grounds for Mandatory Rejection (Regulation 23)	If you answer “Yes” to any question in this section it is unlikely your proposal will be evaluated further
Grounds for Discretionary Rejection (Regulations 23, 24, 25 & 26 of the Public Contract Regulations 2006).	If you answer “Yes” to any question in this section it is possible your proposal will not be evaluated further. However, if you can demonstrate that suitable remedial action (<u>Complete Annex B</u>) was taken then this information will be taken into account by the Authority when considering putting your proposal forward for further evaluation.
Bona Fide Tendering	If you answer ‘No’ to any of the questions in 2 – 6 inclusive your proposal will not be evaluated. If you answer ‘NO’ to question 1 you must complete <u>Annex C</u> advising the Authority of the remedial action taken.
Economic and Financial Standing (Regulation 24)	Using the financial information uploaded (e.g. accounts, etc) a financial risk assessment will be carried out on the financial standing of your company. This will be Risk Rated as Red, Amber or Green. Those assessed as being a Red Risk will be eliminated from the exercise.
Tax Compliance	Bidders must self-certify their tax compliance. If you answer ‘yes’ to any question you must complete <u>Annex T.</u> This information will be taken into account by the Authority when considering putting your proposal forward for further evaluation
	Details of all contracts that have been performed in the last 3 years that are relevant to the Authority’s requirement. These can be from either the public or private sector. Certificates of

Remploy ES (including Work Choice) Instructions to Potential Bidders

Technical and Professional ability (Past Performance)	Performance (Annex U) must be provided from each contract. Failure to provide sufficient evidence of minimum standards of reliability set you will be excluded from further evaluation in this procurement. Please note that the Authority will verify a random selection of certificates (minimum of 25%) and at least 2 self certificates.
Technical Envelope	
Draft Security Plan (Pre-populated by Remploy)	You must provide a Draft Security Plan at <u>Annex E</u>
DWP Offshore Proposal Questionnaire	If applicable, you must complete Off-shoring questionnaire at <u>Annex F</u>
Qualitative Evaluation	Tenders will be scored using predetermined scoring criteria as detailed within this document.
Proposed Sub-Contractors	Annex I
Key Staff and Sub-Contractor Key Staff	Annex J (to be pre-populated by Remploy)
Freedom of Information	Not scored but if consider that any of the information included as part of your tender to be commercially sensitive you must complete <u>Annex Q</u>
Proposed amendments	Not scored. Please complete <u>Annex R</u> should you wish to suggest non-material changes to the Terms and Conditions
Declaration by Potential Bidder <u>PLEASE NOTE: -</u> Failure to provide all of the documents requested will invalidate your tender.	Please complete and attach the declaration provided to confirm that all the information requested by the Authority has been completed and uploaded as part of your tender proposal. This is your commitment that you offer to enter into a contract with the Authority as stipulated in the declaration.
Commercial Envelope	
Pricing Proposal (Financial Evaluation) Linked to Annex S	The financial evaluation will be undertaken separately to the Qualitative Evaluation using predetermined scoring criteria as detailed within this document. Your pricing proposal must be uploaded to <u>Annex S</u>

Award Criteria and Weighting

- 9.8 The information provided in the tender proposal will be evaluated against the pre-determined Award Criteria as stated in the Invitation to Negotiate.
- 9.9 The ITN set up on the DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal requests Potential Bidders to submit responses which directly correspond with the Award Criteria. The overarching Award Criteria will often be made up of sub-criteria by which the Award Criteria will be evaluated.
- 9.10 The table below gives full details on how the qualitative side of proposal will be evaluated.

Remploy ES (including Work Choice) Instructions to Potential Bidders

Topic Area	Aims and Objectives – Evaluation Topics	Detailed Questions	Weighting	
<p>Work Choice – Deliver a contract that:</p> <p>Overall Weighting 20%</p>	<p>Meets or exceeds the delivery requirements and performance expectations for the contract as part of the overall business plan</p>	<p>Q1 – Outline how you can strengthen Remploy's existing delivery and their proposals for Work Choice as outlined in the Business and Commercialisation plans , including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of your ability to support the delivery of Work Choice, specifically where you propose changes / improvements to the Remploy delivery model Detailing the impact of your proposal on the customer journey Detailing how you would apply your skills and experience in support of NewCo delivering against this contract, including the use of sub contractor networks and existing supply chains Detailing the impact of your Work Choice proposal on the commercial sustainability of NewCo, including the identification of risks against business and transition plans and how you would mitigate against these. <p>Page Limit – 5 pages</p>	Scoring	10
		<p>Q2 – Based on your response to Q1, set out the performance expectations that you will deliver and the assumptions for this proposal, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rationale for the offer The conversion rates The impact on the outcomes for disabled people <p>Page Limit – 2 pages</p>	Scoring	10
<p>Commercial Viability – A sustainable viable business that:</p> <p>Overall Weighting 40%</p>	<p>Positions the business for future business stability through replacement business for current contracts within equivalent markets (eg replacing Work Choice and Work Programme income as part of the core mission)</p>	<p>Q3 – Outline how you will support NewCo to replace its current business, notably its Work Choice and Work Programme contracts post-2017 with particular focus on commercial positioning in relation to future programmes and outcomes for disabled people / support for disabled people.</p> <p>Evidence your answer by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of your ability to deliver the kind of support you describe Offering detail on how you would apply these skills and experience in your proposal Detailing the impact of your proposal on the commercial sustainability of NewCo, including identifying risks against business and transition plans and how you will mitigate against these, Describe the impact of your proposals on key stakeholders, setting out how you propose to manage those relationships to maximise the benefit to the NewCo as part of a successful exit. <p>Page Limit – 9 pages</p>	Scoring	30

Remploy ES (including Work Choice) Instructions to Potential Bidders

Topic Area	Aims and Objectives – Evaluation Topics	Detailed Questions	Weighting	
	Positions the business for future growth in new markets	<p>Q4 – Outline how you will support the new business to win contracts and grow in the new markets identified in the agreed business plan; and/or markets not highlighted in the business plan but consistent with Remploy's social mission, including the impact on the outcomes / support for disabled people.</p> <p>Evidence your answer by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Detailing why the support you describe is consistent with Remploy's social mission Evidence of your ability to deliver the kind of support you describe Offering detail on how you would apply these skills and experience in your proposal Detailing the impact of your proposal on the commercial sustainability of NewCo, including identifying risks against business and transition plans and how you will mitigate against these, Describe the impact of your proposals on key stakeholders, setting out how you propose to manage those relationships to maximise the benefit to the NewCo as part of a successful exit. <p>Page Limit – 6 pages</p>	Scoring	10
Partnership – Create an effective partnership with employees that: Overall Weighting 40%	Meets or exceeds the principles of Employee Ownership including demonstrating employees will have a meaningful stake in the business	<p>Q5 – Set out your proposed approach to establishing a significant employee stake in NewCo, specifically with a view to protecting of the social mission, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How you propose to allocate shareholding (in voting, capital and income terms) and how this will support maximising the protection of the social mission. The corporate structure to be created, and the Governance arrangements including Board structure and composition Proposals for how employees will hold their stake (e.g. Employee Benefit Trust, Employee Ownership Trust) Any associated reserved matters that could impact the protection of the social mission and how you propose to resolve issues (including arbitration) How this approach protects and advances Remploy's mission to transform the lives of disabled people through work. <p>Page Limit – 5 pages</p>	Scoring	15
		<p>Q6 - Outline your proposed approach for managing the day-to-day operation of NewCo. Your response should give consideration to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for how any direct employee role in governance arrangements will work, for instance a staff council and/or other representative structures Involvement of employees in transition and change management of the business. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Decision making processes, authority levels and accountabilities Approach to communication and sharing of information with employees as co-owners 	Scoring	15

Remploy ES (including Work Choice) Instructions to Potential Bidders

Topic Area	Aims and Objectives – Evaluation Topics	Detailed Questions	Weighting	
		<p>of the business.</p> <p>iii. Collaboration, relationship sharing and day-to-day management of any conflicts of interest.</p> <p>iii. How this approach motivates and involves employees as business owners advances the mission and ensure the sustainability of the business.</p> <p>Page Limit – 4 pages</p>		
		<p>Q7 - Outline your proposed approach to realising the benefits of establishing a significant employee stake in the NewCo, specifically harnessing employee commitment, motivation and retention as critical business performance, this could include (but is not limited to):</p> <p>i. Description of how future strategy will be developed for NewCo, including how you propose employees will contribute to setting the strategic direction of the business and strategic decision making.</p> <p>ii. Harnessing employee creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>iii. How the proposed approach advances the mission and ensure the sustainability of the business</p> <p>Page Limit – 3 pages</p>	Scoring	10
<p>Transition and Sustainability – A effective transition of the business as part of a sustainable transaction that:</p> <p>Overall Weighting – None (Risk Based)</p>	<p>Meets the transaction timetable and requirements of the process of a formal agreement to exit by 1st April 2015, including governance documents and outputs of due diligence.</p>	<p>Q8 – Confirm, including relevant / appropriate documentation, your capability and capacity in supporting the completion of the proposed transaction within the timescales as set out as part of this commercial process, including being in a position to support the authority in identifying a preferred bidder by end March 2015. This requirement includes capacity and capability to agree to:</p> <p>Documentation to include (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Articles of Association o Shareholder agreement o Deed of Trust o Business Transfer Agreement / Service Agreement <p>Page Limit – 1 page</p>	<p><u>RISK BASED ANALYSIS</u></p> <p><u>GENERAL</u></p> <p>A Red or Green risk will be apportioned in this section depending on the outcomes of each risk analysis. A Red risk will be deemed an exclusion from the process</p>	<p>RED – No commitment to timeline or unacceptable risk of delivery to timeline</p> <p>GREEN – Commitment to timeline and acceptable risk as part of due diligence (including appropriate mitigation plans)</p>

Remploy ES (including Work Choice) Instructions to Potential Bidders

Topic Area	Aims and Objectives – Evaluation Topics	Detailed Questions	Weighting	
		Q9 – Please complete a final version of your transition plan, reflecting your additional/amendments/enhancements to the Remploy Transition Plan No Page Limit		

Qualitative Scoring Methodology

- 9.11 The responses to the ITN will then be scored against the criteria and weightings stipulated in the table above using the scoring scale set out below.

Score	Description
0	No response – No evidence across the majority of requirements, supporting significantly reduced outcomes / support for disabled people – (Knockout)
1	Poor response – Little evidence against some of the requirements, supporting broadly equivalent outcomes / support for disabled people
2	Average response – Some good evidence across some of the requirements, supporting broadly equivalent or improved outcomes / support for disabled people
3	Good response – Good evidence across the majority of requirements, supporting broadly equivalent or improved outcomes / support for disabled people
4	Strong response – Strong evidence across all or majority of requirements, supporting improved outcomes / support for disabled people
5	Full response – Very strong and clear evidence across all requirements, supporting improved outcomes / support for disabled people

Price Evaluation Methodology

- 9.12 Financial evaluation will be based on the Net Present Value of cash flows associated with each bid, generated from a discounted cash flow analysis. Future cash flows will be discounted at 3.5%. The best bid, i.e. that delivering the lowest net present cost, will be awarded full marks; marks awarded to the remaining bids will reflect the degree to which their net present costs are higher than the best bid. The outcome of negotiations on asset / liability handling will be reflected in the discounted cash flow analysis, e.g. if a property does not transfer we will factor in the cost of exiting the lease. We need to confirm the business case underpinning this process remains valid and delivers value for money to taxpayers. Bids will need to demonstrate an equivalent or lower net present cost than retention of Remploy ES in government control.
- 9.13 The Capital requirement is not fixed at this point as will be dependent on outcome of negotiations over the assets (including cash) / liabilities that transfer and the plans for business growth. The ES business plan is indicative, so as we conclude negotiations will seek evidence of the access to capital appropriate to the detail of the bid. The purpose of this is to provide confidence in the solvency of the business over the initial period outside of government.

Tender Clarification

Remploy ES (including Work Choice) Instructions to Potential Bidders

9.14 DWP may need to clarify details of your tender and in those instances DWP will send any questions using the DWP e-Procurement Solution portal to the named person (by email) that is registered on the system, who should arrange for a reply to be provided by the stipulated deadline.

9.15 DWP may seek independent financial and market advice to validate information declared, or to assist in the evaluation.

10. Contract Award

Parent Company Guarantee (PCG)

10.1 If your company has a parent company and should you be deemed successful in tendering for this contract, then DWP will require a signed Parent Company Guarantee (PCG) to be in place prior to any contract(s) being signed.

10.2 The PCG will not be negotiable; however there may be exceptional circumstances where the wording needs to be amended or an equivalent deed of guarantee supplied. These may include Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs), consortia and organisations that have parent companies based abroad.

10.3 If the parent company is a charity, the Authority would need to understand whether there is anything in the provisions of the charity's constitution that prevents them from being able to offer a PCG. In these circumstances the Authority may require an alternative guarantor.

Ranking of Bidder Submissions – Recommendation for Contract Award

10.4 The tender process has been designed to ensure that tenders are evaluated fairly to ascertain the most economically advantageous tender and once the qualitative and financial aspects have been evaluated the Authority will produce a ranked merit list based on this tender process.

10.5 The Potential Bidder(s), who obtains the highest overall score from the evaluation process, taking into account the Award Criteria weightings, will be recommended for contract award.

10.6 Before any contract can be entered into the Authority is mandated to seek and obtain Independent, Ministerial Approval and possibly Crown Representative Approval.

10.6.1 Independent Approval

The results of the Qualitative and Price Evaluation Process (resultant rankings along with the marks awarded) will be independently checked and verified by individual(s) not previously involved in the procurement process.

Subject to this Independent Approval the Department will then seek Ministerial Approval before an award of contract can be made.

10.6.2 Ministerial Approval

The final decision to award will be subject to Ministerial Approval. No communication of any details regardless of whether a tenderer has been successful or otherwise will be issued until this approval has been granted and authorised by the Minister concerned. Once this approval has been communicated to the procurement team they will have responsibility for the issue of the appropriate successful/unsuccessful letters to all those Bidders that submitted a response to the ITN.

Mandatory Standstill Period

- 10.7 The standstill period is a 10 day pause between contract award decision and the formal award of the contract, and is a legal requirement of Part A Services, which all Government Departments must comply with. As this contract is for Part B Services, there is no legal requirement for The Authority to apply a standstill period.

Publication of Contract Award on Contracts Finder

- 10.8 Irrespective of whether or not publication of a Contract Award Notice in OJEU is required, details of all contracts awarded with a value greater than £10,000 will be published on the Contracts Finder website. Details will be published after 20 days following the end of the standstill period or after 20 days from the award of contract where no standstill applies.

11. Post Contract Award

Contract Documentation

- 11.1 The Authority will be responsible for producing a final contract document and issuing to the successful Bidder.

Expenditure with SMEs

- 11.2 The Authority is required to provide regular reports on the level of procurement spend with SMEs to the Cabinet Office. To measure and accurately report on this, the Contractor, and where applicable, its sub-contractors shall identify the volume of indirect expenditure the Authority undertakes with SMEs and shall provide this information on a quarterly basis to the Authority or Cabinet Office.

12. Use of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Contractor's Supply Chain

The Authority recognises the important role SMEs have in helping to deliver economic growth and prosperity. SMEs are defined as enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro. The Authority is committed to supporting the government's target of 25% of government spending with third party bidders to go to SMEs through either direct spend or indirectly through the supply chain where it is relevant to the contractual requirement to do so and provides value for money.

In support of the government's commitment on SMEs, the Authority is putting in place processes to promote greater engagement with SMEs. The Authority encourages its bidders to make their sub-contracting opportunities accessible to smaller companies and implement SME-friendly policies in their supply-chains.

The Contractor is encouraged to:

- Open opportunities for SMEs in supply chains by splitting requirements into smaller elements to make them more attractive to the SME market whilst bringing innovation, flexibility and value for money;
- Advertise any sub-contracting opportunities where appropriate and economical to do so, for example by using Contracts Finder or informing local networks/partners;
- Where possible pay SMEs earlier than the contractual requirement of 30 days from receipt of valid invoice; and
- Work with SMEs throughout the life of the contract to develop innovative and cost effective solutions delivered through the supply chain.

Regular contract review meetings should be used to enable both parties to explore continued and increased use of SMEs where appropriate throughout the life of the contract. Additional information may be requested by the Authority on the volume of business undertaken throughout the supply chain with SMEs

13. DWP Complaints Procedure

13.1 The Authority has published a [Commercial Complaints Process](#) for use during competitive procurement.

This process gives details of: -

- DWP Commercial Code of Practice – Competitive Tendering
- The DWP Commercial Complaints Process
- Information to accompany a commercial complaint