

Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Subject: Testing for Online Personalisation in the UK

Sourcing Reference Number: CR18162

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

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
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Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS) brings a commercial attitude to the public sector; helping our 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

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) was created as a result of a merger between the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), as part of the Machinery of Government (MoG) changes in July 2016.

The Department is responsible for:

- developing and delivering a comprehensive industrial strategy and leading the government's relationship with business;
- ensuring that the country has secure energy supplies that are reliable, affordable and clean;
- ensuring the UK remains at the leading edge of science, research and innovation; and
- tackling climate change.

BEIS is a ministerial department, supported by 46 agencies and public bodies.

We have around 2,500 staff working for BEIS. Our partner organisations include 9 executive agencies employing around 14,500 staff.

<http://www.beis.gov.uk>

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	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 1 Victoria Street London SW1H 0ET
3.2	Buyer name	Victoria Clewer
3.3	Buyer contact details	research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£115,000 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 <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	Friday, 2 nd November 2018 Contracts Finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Emptoris messaging system	Monday, 12 th November 2018 11:00 GMT
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	Tuesday, 13 th November 2018
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	Monday, 19 th November 2018 14:00 GMT
3.10	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Monday, 26 th November 2018
3.11	Anticipated Award date	Monday, 26 th November 2018
3.12	Anticipated Contract Start date	Monday, 3 rd December 2018
3.13	Anticipated Contract End date	Friday, 29 th March 2019
3.14	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

Background

The digital economy as a Government priority

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has an ambitious Industrial Strategy which aims to put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future, ensuring that the UK takes advantage of major global changes, improving people's lives and the country's productivity.¹ The Artificial Intelligence and Data Grand Challenge is already taking action to put the UK at the forefront of the AI and data revolution.²

The Consumer & Competition Policy directorate in BEIS is responsible for ensuring that markets work effectively and in the interests of consumers. Digital markets open incredible new opportunities for innovation and growth, and it is our responsibility to ensure that these markets continue to evolve in a way which remains competitive, innovative and sustainable

BEIS published the Modernising Consumer Markets green paper in April 2018, which set out a range of measures to ensure that markets are working for all consumers. The paper outlined a range of issues which will be considered in our ongoing Competition Law Review and sought evidence on various challenges in the digital economy, such as the fair use of consumer data and personalisation.

This work in BEIS fits into a broader, coordinated approach across Government to make the UK a world leader in digital markets. This includes the work of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, such as the Digital Charter³ and the new Centre for Data Ethics & Innovation⁴, and the HM Treasury Expert Panel on the Digital Economy chaired by Jason Furman⁵.

The importance of personalisation

Personalisation is where prices or search results are influenced by consumer characteristics or behaviour. This is a core aspect of the consumer experience in digital markets. The ability for firms to tailor search results and offers on the basis of consumer interests, habits and preferences is helpful in cutting through vast quantities of information online. Algorithms also deliver innovative new digital services such as search engines, online marketplaces and digital comparison tools. Yet, we know that when made aware of this personalisation, consumers feel uneasy about it in some online contexts. Surveyed consumers perceive personalisation to be unfair: 78% of UK

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/the-uks-industrial-strategy>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-the-grand-challenges/missions>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-charter>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-centre-for-data-ethics-and-innovation/centre-for-data-ethics-and-innovation-consultation>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/former-obama-advisor-to-examine-digital-competition-in-the-uk>

internet users who were surveyed think that online platforms should be regulated to limit the extent that search results are personalised using consumer data.⁶ Further, while not inherently harmful per se, personalisation can be used to manipulate consumers and to cause redistribution from some groups of consumers to others, and from consumers to firms, in ways in which we do not currently fully understand.

Responses to the Modernising Consumer Markets green paper provided useful evidence on the prevalence of personalisation as well as views on when it may be more or less harmful to consumers. All stakeholder groups, ranging from consumer organisations to the Competition & Markets Authority (CMA), were highly supportive of further research into the use of personalisation online. The ethical concerns around personalisation, and consumer profiling and targeting more generally, have also been identified as potential areas of focus for the new Centre for Data Ethics & Innovation, which will be looking to draw on the best evidence available.⁷

Hence BEIS is looking to commission research to evidence where, when and how personalisation is occurring in online markets. We consider this to be essential before we can make an informed judgement on the importance of personalisation for consumers and competitive dynamics in digital markets. There is currently no comprehensive evidence on the extent of personalisation in the UK, in terms of either market coverage nor the types of data used for personalisation. By delivering this evidence, the research will allow Government to make an effective diagnosis of the importance of personalisation for consumers and competition in different contexts. This will directly support the BEIS priority of promoting competitive markets and responsible business practices, as well as efforts across Government to foster sustainable growth in digital markets.

Aims and Objectives of the Project

The **objective** of the research is to provide an in-depth assessment of the prevalence and magnitude of personalisation of consumer prices and search results in the digital economy. The existing studies to evidence price and search discrimination online have largely focussed on the US markets; and UK studies have been limited in their ability to isolate specific characteristics and behaviours which are driving personalisation. An in-depth assessment of current practices will only be possible by taking a bespoke, detailed and systematic approach.

The specific research questions are:

1. In what markets is personalisation (i.e. price and/or search discrimination) occurring in a consistent and non-random way? Are there particular features within these markets which support personalisation?
2. In what ways are consumers made aware that personalisation is taking place?
3. How frequent and significant are any observable differences in prices and/or search results?

⁶ European Commission, 2016, '[Special Eurobarometer 447](#)'

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-centre-for-data-ethics-and-innovation/centre-for-data-ethics-and-innovation-consultation>

4. What factors are influencing any observed differences in prices and search results?

The research must provide an in-depth picture across the digital economy by assessing a wide range of consumer markets and potential drivers of personalisation (as outlined in the next section).

The ultimate **aim** is for this research to inform ongoing Government priorities outlined above, most notably the BEIS Competition Law Review, the DCMS National Data Strategy and the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation. The Competition Law Review is considering whether the UK competition regime is suitably equipped to tackle the new challenges posed by digital markets. Understanding how 'big data' is being used for price and search discrimination, and the extent that this can disadvantage certain groups of consumers and/or give certain firms a competitive advantage over rivals, is of paramount importance. The research may also highlight potential advantages to consumers from personalisation.

There is a significant opportunity for the UK to lead global understanding of the issues around personalisation, both in terms of diagnosing importance and in taking pragmatic steps to ensure the effective functioning of digital markets. Several jurisdictions have considered whether personalisation is occurring, but no significant policy development has occurred as a result of the research.

Suggested Methodology

The project will have five main stages:

1. Identification of markets, products/services, websites and features to test
2. Development of test materials
3. Data generation and capture
4. Analysis
5. Write-up

Stage 1: Identification of drivers, products and websites to test

The first step is to identify the products and websites to test. The successful consultant will need to work with us to identify how broad the study will be especially given the huge range of markets and factors we could choose to investigate. A specific and targeted approach is crucial to the success of the research.

One factor that will need to be considered is the specific features or conditions which will vary when testing for differences in prices and search results. We must capture the current prevalence of practices in consumer markets in a way that is systematic and broadly representative of different contexts in the digital economy. In combination, the tests must give good coverage of a wide range of contexts and situations that consumers commonly find themselves in online.

The researchers will review the existing literature on personalisation to inform selection on the basis of criteria set out by BEIS. BEIS will provide the supplier with an initial longlist of options to consider, along with a list of the key existing studies to consider.

At the end of this stage the researcher will run a workshop with the project steering board to make a final decision on the markets, products and conditions to test. The following sections set out the criteria we will consider.

1a. Potential drivers of personalisation to be tested

Countless factors and techniques are available to firms in the digital economy to personalise the experience for consumers. To prioritise over those which may be technically possible, the research will prioritise on the basis of:

- Technical and practical feasibility- especially as technical feasibility can change rapidly online (i.e. what is implementable in a range of online circumstances and at relatively low cost to the firm);
- Evidence from previous studies;
- Anecdotal evidence and/or coverage in media; and
- Potential redistributive consequences and impact on consumer welfare if personalisation is taking place.

As a minimum, the researcher must be able to test for the impact of variations in the following criteria:

- Customer journey
 - Return/repeat visits to website
 - Search history, including:
 - Products on the same website
 - The same products on other websites
 - Route to website:
 - Accessing the website URL directly
 - Accessing via different search engines (both sponsored and organic links)
 - Accessing via a digital comparison website
 - Accessing via social media
- Customer characteristics
 - Being logged-in and/or a 'member' of a website (where applicable)
 - Operating system
 - Web browser
 - Using a mobile or desktop device
 - Geography/location
 - Previous spend with website

We would also be interested in how websites and platforms use cookies. The researcher must also have the ability to combine criteria above, e.g. a user accessing via a comparison tool and with a history of viewing the focal product(s) on different websites. Clearly, the number of different combinations of the above characteristics (as well as combinations with markets) is considerable, hence clear and pragmatic prioritisation is needed on the basis of the criteria listed above.

1b. Consumer markets (products and websites) to be tested

The selection process must ensure that the tests cover a diverse range of markets and contexts across the digital economy. As such, we propose the products and websites to be tested are selected on the basis of:

- Theoretical and practical feasibility: on what websites and for what products is personalisation more feasible? This may relate to the low feasibility of arbitrage for the product, for homogeneity, whether the good/service itself is personalised, and/or the transparency of price comparison.
- Evidence from previous studies;
- Value of online sales: so that the focus is proportionate to consumers' online activity and spending habits; and
- Potential impact on consumer welfare if personalisation is taking place.

An initial list of markets/products and features is set out below. The researcher must be able to test for personalisation in the following contexts:

- Search engines
- Digital Comparison tools
- Travel: accommodation, flights (Expedia, Booking.com, Opodo)
- Online media: eBooks, computer games (Amazon Kindle store)
- Clothing and shoes
- Consumer electronics
- Electrical household appliances: white goods (fridges, washing machines)
- Cosmetics
- Healthcare products Sports and outdoor equipment
- House and garden products
- Vehicles: cars, motorcycles

We recognise that the project is highly scalable, with the number of trials, and complexity of trials, increased or decreased at varying degrees of cost to the supplier.

Stage 2: Development of test materials

General requirements

The main source of new evidence will be through experiments in a controlled environment which will use virtual personas to generate and document quotes and search results from different websites. We suggest a methodology which draws on the best elements of approaches taken by international research (such as Hannak et al., 2014⁸, and Mikians et al., 2012⁹) and complements recent UK evidence (namely the real-world experiments by the European Commission¹⁰ and lab-based study by the CMA¹¹).

Closely following Hannak et al. (2014)¹², a substantial part of the primary research will involve creating bespoke scripts to generate and then extract price and search information from websites. Crucially, the scripts need to generate quotes/results which

⁸ https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/public_comments/2015/09/00011-97593.pdf

⁹ <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.352.3188&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/consumer-market-study-online-market-segmentation-through-personalised-pricing-offers-european-union_en

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pricing-algorithms-research-collusion-and-personalised-pricing>

¹² https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/public_comments/2015/09/00011-97593.pdf

are identical in the timing of the request and constant in all other potentially relevant features. The trial materials will hence be able to vary a single characteristic at a time to ensure that, as far as reasonably possible, other characteristics are controlled for. Some experiments may vary one characteristic at a time; others may test the impact of changing combinations of factors in unison (e.g. a combination search history and being logged-in as a member).

Specific requirements

To test for the effects such as return/repeat visits to the website and search history, the scripts may have to dynamically develop virtual personas over time, which exhibit specific dynamic behaviours (such as repeatedly browsing or searching for a product) and are then used to generate the quotes and search results. This may involve training personas through repeat searches for low- or high-end products, similarly to the methodology of Mikians et al. (2012).¹³

Some tests may create virtual personas with a combination of factors which form an illusion of a particular consumer group. For example, the persona of an affluent young professional in London may be created through a combination of browsing history (both of products and unrelated websites, such as newspapers), device type and location signals.

Controlling the test environment

The methodology will also need to take account of other sources of background ‘noise’ which affect prices and search results but are unrelated to the characteristics of interest. The background noise may be caused by, for example, changes in inventory levels, distributed infrastructure/datacentres and/or websites conducting AB testing.

As far as possible, we recommend that the scripts used to generate the search results and prices, and then extract the data of interest, are automated. This will allow for multiple repetitions at low cost and minimise the chance of human error.

Further information

The technical details of the software requirement are set out in detail by the authors of the equivalent studies conducted in the US.¹⁴ The authors have made all technical information and trial materials available (including scripts, parsers and raw data) but these will need to be adapted to function on the websites and products of interest for a UK study.

Stage 3: Data generation and capture

This is the key stage of evidence gathering, where the custom-made scripts generate the data on price and search results under different conditions. BEIS will own the data collected and it will be made available for further in-house analysis.

Each condition for each product will be repeated multiple times to ensure that the result is non-random and collected over a number of weeks to ensure consistency. However, the supplier needs to ensure that requests appear to be genuine queries, so that the

¹³ <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.352.3188&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

¹⁴ See <http://personalization.ccs.neu.edu/Projects/PriceDiscrimination/>

website does not suspect they are automatic, suspicious or at risk of overburdening the website.

The trials will be grouped and sequenced to allow for learning from one trial to the next. For example, one characteristic (or combination of characteristics) may be found to be particularly influential in early rounds of tests, and we would want to explore this further in the later tests.

In terms of timing, the testing may take place over December and January, which could introduce some seasonal bias in the way prices vary and products are advertised, particularly in retail markets. For example, aggressive discounting may be more prevalent over this period, prices may be particularly volatile, stock levels more variable, on- and off-season products changing more quickly, and/or algorithms otherwise not operating as they would at other times of the year. The potential increase in price volatility increases the importance of simultaneity when generating price/search information from websites (since it may be more frequently changing) and of repeating the tests on numerous occasions across several weeks. We would also advise that the trials are not conducted in the last week of December or the first week of January, when price movements may be particularly unusual. We also ask bidders to set out how they would control for seasonal variations and volatility in their proposed approach to Stages 3 and 4.

Stage 4: Analysis

The next stage is to analyse the data extracted for any evidence of observed prices and search results under the various conditions. Statistical analysis will be needed to identify any statistically significant differences across trials, which are not the result of chance or other influences.

When analysing search results and rankings, the researcher needs to apply a clear and consistent methodology for identifying notable differences in search results, and how differences are correlated with price or quality. For example, the researcher may take an average price of the first three, five and ten results shown; and/or note the average customer rating of the first three, five and ten results.

Stage 5: Write-up

The final stage is to write-up the results into a clear and accessible format.

The researchers will provide a clear, concise and standalone executive summary of all key findings which are easily understandable to someone not familiar with the technical detail. A complete, publishable methodology will provide all the technical detail required to replicate the trials in future (with any adaptations necessary to respond to changes in website design).

Indicative timings

The table below gives indicative timings which would allow results to inform the Competition Law Review.

Task	Timing
Stage 1: Identification of products, websites and features to test	November/December 2018

Stage 2: Development of test materials	December/January 2019
Stage 3: Data generation and capture	January/February 2019
Stage 4: Analysis	February/March 2019
Stage 5: Write-up	March 2019

Expertise required

The five stages clearly require the supplier to draw on expertise in a range of different fields: data science- including strong IT skills to interpret the data collected, data handling, statistics, public policy, written communications and external presentations. We would advise all bidders to consider drawing on additional specialist support as necessary (if required) to ensure they can deliver on all these areas.

Ethical considerations

The researcher must ensure that the research is delivered in a transparent, fair and ethical way. Most importantly, it is important that the trials do not cause a real, material impact on firm or consumer outcomes or expectations.

The data generation phase (Stage 3) will be generating webpages (search results and product pages with price information) purely for the purpose of extracting the data of interest (on search results and prices). We ask that this is done with the permission of the websites investigated or otherwise in a way that the supplier can justify on the grounds of ethical practice. However, we acknowledge that websites may alter their behaviour once they have been pre-informed.

Some of the tests may involve the creation of fake/virtual personas with artificially created browsing history (e.g. generated by an automated process which makes repeat searches for high- or low-end products). Whilst this may mislead the algorithms which are processing the (fake) signals when serving price and search information, this is not considered to be an ethical concern since it imposes no obvious cost or disruption on businesses.

There would be more serious ethical considerations, however, if the experiments create personas with different purchase history because this may involve making purchases or reservations which affect material outcomes of business or consumers. For example, making hotel reservations to see if this influences subsequent price observations could incur a cost on business even if the reservations are cancelled, as the hotel may not be able to rebook the room, or a consumer may make a different booking because they believe that a particular hotel or room is not available. As such, experimenting with purchase history clearly has ethical implications, and we therefore would not propose

testing this variable unless the researchers can propose a methodology which overcomes these concerns.

We ask that bidders set out what research code(s) they comply with and how they would ensure that all trials are run in a way which is fully compliant with these code(s).

Deliverables

The key deliverables are:

1. Executive summary
2. Technical report
3. A full dataset of results
4. Trial materials in a publishable and reusable format
5. Two presentations of results (internal and external audiences)
6. Methodology workshop

The executive summary should be a succinct, standalone document which covers all key results in a format that is accessible for audiences of all levels of expertise and background knowledge. This should be no more than 10 pages in length.

The detailed technical report must contain:

- Full methodology, set out and explained in a level of detail that would allow a future researcher to repeat the approach. Depending on length, the full technical detail may be restricted to a technical appendix.
- Complete findings in all tests, set out in a clear and structured way. The write-up should draw attention to the most noteworthy findings and present in a balanced and academically rigorous way which highlights limitations and caveats of the approach.

The write-up should outline the real-world implications of the findings. For example, whether it appears that certain characteristics are likely to cause consumers to by quoted higher prices (or a selection of more expensive products) in particular markets.

All written outputs need to be fully quality assured and of publishable quality.

The full write-up will be accompanied by a dataset of raw full results, provided to BEIS in a commonly-used data format.

All trial materials (such as code and scripts) used to run the trial must be provided to BEIS in a format which will allow other researchers to repeat results in future. These materials need to be of a very high analytical and technical standard, with clear structure and labelling, such that a subsequent researcher with relevant technical expertise could use straightforwardly.

At the end of the presentation, the researchers will present results to an internal audience of civil servants. There will be a further presentation to external stakeholders at the time of publicly launching the research.

This will be a pioneering data science project in the UK. To ensure that the methodology is robust and effectively peer reviewed, the researchers need to explain the detail of their proposed approach to the project working group, which will comprise data scientists in BEIS, DCMS and the CMA. At the end of the project, as part of the handover of the full trial materials, the researcher will run a workshop to explain how

they are followed and implemented.

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 ($5+5+6=16 \div 3 = 5.33$))

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	AW4.1	Contract Terms Part 1
Commercial	AW4.2	Contract Terms Part 2
Price	AW5.1	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	40%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	20%

Quality	PROJ1.3	Understanding the project Environment	10%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and Timescales	10%

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:

$$\text{Score} = \{\text{weighting percentage}\} \times \{\text{bidder's score}\} = 20\% \times 60 = 12$$

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 $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

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 ($80/100 \times 50 = 40$)

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](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)