



Mini Competition

Mini Competition against an existing Framework Agreement (MC) on behalf of Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

Subject UK SBS Study on Costs and Benefits for Higher Education Providers of Operating in Different Geographic Areas of England

Sourcing reference number FWRECR16109HEFCE Lot 1

Table of Contents

Section	Content
1	<u>About UK Shared Business Services Ltd.</u>
2	<u>About our Customer</u>
3	<u>Working with UK Shared Business Services Ltd.</u>
4	<u>Specification</u>
5	<u>Evaluation of Bids</u>
6	<u>Evaluation questionnaire</u>
7	<u>General Information</u>
Appendix	N/A

Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Customers

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

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

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

Section 2 – About Our Customer

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

HEFCE funds and regulates universities and colleges in England. We invest on behalf of students and the public to promote excellence and innovation in research, teaching and knowledge exchange. In all our activities we aim to:

- ensure accountability for funding and be a proportionate regulator
- act in the public interest and be open, fair, impartial and objective
- be an effective broker between Government and the sector and in doing so, ensure that we are implementing government policy effectively.

Further information can be found at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>

Section 3 - Working with UK Shared Business Services Ltd.

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	Customer Name and address	Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Nicholson House Lime Kiln Close Stoke Gifford BRISTOL BS34 8SR
3.2	Buyer name	Liz Vincent
3.3	Buyer contact details	Research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	£80,000 including 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 Mini Competition to all Bidders	03/11/2016
3.7	Latest date/time Mini Competition clarification questions should be received through Emptoris messaging system	09/11/2016 14:00
3.8	Latest date/time Mini Competition clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	11/11/2016
3.9	Latest date/time Mini Competition Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	16/11/2016 14:00
3.10	Date/time Bidders should be available if face to face clarifications are required	W/C 28/11/2016
3.10	Anticipated rejection of unsuccessful Bids date	05/12/2016
3.11	Anticipated Award Date	05/12/2016
3.12	Anticipated Call Off Contract Start Date	07/12/2016
3.13	Anticipated Call Off Contract End Date	28/04/2017
3.14	Bid Validity Period	60 Working Days
3.15	Framework and Lot the procurement should be based on	BIS Research & Evaluation Framework CR150025 LOT 1

Section 4 – Specification

1. Introduction

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) distributes government money for higher education in England. It supports teaching, research and knowledge exchange, and ensures this money is used to deliver the greatest benefits to students and the wider public. HEFCE's funding does not fully meet costs: the proportion of an institution's total income that comes from HEFCE will depend on the fees it charges, its activities and the money it raises from other sources. For a fuller overview, please see HEFCE's Guide to funding¹.

For most subjects, the main income stream to fund teaching at providers in England is student fees. Publicly funded loans are available to most students to meet the cost of tuition fees, and these are repayable after the student has completed their course and once their income exceeds a certain level. HEFCE continues to contribute to the cost of teaching in line with the guidance on funding priorities defined annually by Government.

The biggest component of HEFCE's teaching funding provides support for high cost subjects, informed by student numbers in different subject areas. There are also a number of targeted allocations, which reflect particular additional costs affecting certain types of students or provision, and currently include (but are not limited to) allocations to support:

- widening access for people from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- improving retention;
- improving provision for disabled students;
- students attending courses in London;
- very high-cost science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Our main research funding method allocates 'mainstream quality-related research (QR)' funding, which distributes grant based on the quality, volume and relative cost of research in different subject areas. In addition to mainstream QR funding, we also allocate grant to contribute towards other research-related costs, including:

- QR research degree programme (RDP) supervision, which reflects postgraduate research student numbers, the relative costs of the subjects they are studying and a measure of relative quality at institutions.
- QR charity support fund, which recognises that many charities, which support research in higher education are not always able to meet the full economic costs of research.
- QR business research element, to support institutions undertaking research with business and

¹ Guide to funding 2016-17: How HEFCE allocates its funds. Please see: www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2016/201607/

industry.

Throughout its existence, HEFCE has provided additional allocations or funding weightings to institutions to take account of the additional cost of operating in inner or outer London², but has not recognised variations in costs that may apply to other parts of the country. These additional allocations and weightings now comprise:

- a targeted allocation for students attending courses in London within teaching funding (totalling £64 million in 2016-17);
- London weightings applied when calculating allocations for widening access, improving retention and improving provision for disabled students, which provide an estimated £6m;
- London weighting on mainstream QR (totalling £33 million);
- London weighting on QR RDP supervision (totalling £7 million);
- London weighting on QR charity support funding (totalling £8 million).

Seventy-one institutions will receive London weighting allocations for teaching in 2016-17, of which 37 will also receive London weightings for research.

HEFCE would now like to commission a study of the costs and benefits for institutions of operating in different geographic areas in England, which can inform future funding policy development.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Project

We recognise that our approach to London weighting is no longer founded on an up-to-date evidence base. Therefore we are conducting a review, and as part of this, engaging a contractor to gather reliable evidence on the variation in relative³ costs and benefits for higher education providers of operating in different geographic areas of England. This should include analysis of the drivers for any regional variations, including the extent to which these regional costs and benefits vary according to the activities of institutions (such as the balance between teaching, research and other activities, and the academic disciplines they offer), and any other institutional characteristics.

The contractor will also provide evidence on the approaches taken by other public funders in determining and contributing to any additional costs associated with operating in London and other areas in England.

In seeking the expertise of an external organisation, we expect the contractor to identify any relevant sources of data, including data and evidence about costs, only in relation to HE provision, incurred by

² Informed by the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics created by the European Office for Statistics. For further information on this see: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/eurostat/index.html>

³ By 'relative' costs/benefits, we are referring to how costs/benefits compare in proportionate terms between different units of analysis (e.g. by geographic region, provider or provider type) or against an England average.

higher education institutions, further education and sixth form colleges and other providers that HEFCE does not fund ('alternative providers') but which have specific course designation⁴ allowing their students access to student support from the Student Loans Company.

The results of this study will be available to inform the development of funding policies by HEFCE and successor bodies.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this study are to provide evidence on:

- The variation in relative costs for higher education providers of operating in different geographic areas of England.
- The benefits derived to higher education providers operating in different geographic areas of England.
- The drivers for regional cost and benefit variations, including the extent to which any such variations differ according to the activities and characteristics of institutions.
- The approaches taken by other public funders in determining and contributing to any additional costs associated with operating in London and other geographic areas.

The study should provide a critical analysis of the strength of the evidence base relating to regional cost and benefit variations and any caveats that might need to be considered when using the evidence base to inform future higher education funding decisions.

The study should cover all higher education providers (HEFCE-funded higher education institutions, HEFCE-funded further education and sixth form colleges, and alternative providers) and enable analysis of the extent to which regional cost and benefit variations might differ between such institutional categories.

4. Background to the Requirement

Grant letter 2016, Government White Paper and HERB

The review of area costs and benefits sits alongside HEFCE's broader teaching funding review which was initiated in response to a Government request in its 2016 grant letter to HEFCE⁵. The letter asked the Council to review its approach to allocating teaching funding in light of the largely completed implementation of the 2012-13 higher education funding reforms. HEFCE is also working with Government to support the successful implementation of its reforms to the regulation and funding of higher education and research, including the creation of the Office for Students (OfS) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). These Government reforms are set out in its Higher Education White Paper⁶ and the Higher Education and Research Bill (HERB)⁷, and provide a focus on teaching excellence, social mobility, competition, and student choice in higher education. The review of area costs and benefits will thus be undertaken in this broad policy context and is expected to be completed in time to inform funding policies from 2018-19.

Background on HEFCE's recognition of area cost variations

⁴ For more information on specific course designation, please see: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/desig/>

⁵ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name,107598,en.html>

⁶ White Paper: Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice, May 2016. Please see:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523546/bis-16-265-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-web.pdf

⁷ Higher Education and Research Bill 2016-17. Please see: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/highereducationandresearch.html>

Throughout its existence, HEFCE has incorporated within its allocations funding or weights to recognise the additional costs of operating in London, but has not recognised any wider variations in costs and benefits of operating in different parts of the country. London weightings differ between inner and outer London and are currently used in our calculation of recurrent grant as follows:

- a) In the targeted teaching allocation for students attending courses in London.
- b) In the targeted teaching allocations relating to widening access, improving retention and improving provision for disabled students.
- c) In the mainstream QR, RDP supervision and charities elements of the research funding model.

Full information on the targeted teaching allocation and how London weightings are applied in the funding models can be found in HEFCE's Guide to funding 2016-17 (www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2016/201607/).

For the academic year 2016-17, the amount of funding relating to provision in London provided within teaching funding is approximately £70 million, comprising £64 million for students attending courses in London and £6 million for the other targeted allocations. The main source of income for teaching is student tuition fees⁸ and while at least in theory fee charges could vary between institutions to reflect differences in areas costs, the overall regulated fee limits that apply to most undergraduates do not differ between different parts of England. This is something that HEFCE's approach to providing London weighting within teaching grant has recognised.

For research, the total is approximately £48 million, comprising £33 million relating to mainstream QR, £7 million for RDP supervision and £8 million for the QR charities element.

Though the methodology of providing London weighting has evolved since 1992, the evidence underpinning it (including the wider perspective on area costs and benefits across the country) has not been updated in the recent past. The review of area costs and benefits and the evidence it is based on has therefore been identified as an important element of the Teaching Funding Review.

6. Requirement

We expect the study to involve a number of different elements, such as:

- Analysis of national datasets and surveys, commonly held by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- Analysis of data relating to higher education providers
- Literature review of the practices and evidence base of other public funders and discussions with them as necessary
- Case studies of, and discussions with, individual higher education providers, and with other bodies and regional associations representing the higher education sector.

The extent and quality of data available on higher education providers is variable:

- For HEFCE-funded HEIs there are large datasets available covering individualised student, staff, finance and estates information⁹, as well as data submitted for the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC)¹⁰ and TRAC for teaching. HEFCE can provide institution-level extracts and summaries of these data sources for the contractors.
- For HEFCE-funded FECs we hold individualised and aggregate student data and it may be possible to access finance and staff¹¹ data from other sources. While student data can be

⁸ In July 2016, institutions (HEFCE-fundable HEIs) forecast the income from tuition fee and education contracts to be £14.7billion for 2015-16.

⁹ Information on data provided by HEIs to HESA is available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection>.

¹⁰ See: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/funding/finsustain/>

¹¹ Information on the Staff Individualised Record for FECs is available from: <http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/research/staffindividualisedrecord/>.

differentiated between higher and further education, the same split of activities is unlikely to be possible for other returns.

- For alternative providers, recent data is available on student numbers¹² and annual accounts (where published).

Given the aims, objectives and scope of the study, as set out above, we would like the contractors to test a range of conclusions that could be inferred about variations in regional costs and benefits and whether the inferences made are reliable.

HEFCE would like the contractor to consider the following broad questions in conducting its study:

(1) How do relative costs for HE providers of operating in different parts of England vary?

(2) Where there is variation in relative costs:

- a) What is the scale of it?
- b) What drives the costs?
- c) Can these costs be explained by factors other than geography?
- d) Do these costs apply equally or differentially to HEIs, FECs and Alternative Providers?

(3) Are there particular benefits for HE providers of operating in different parts of England and if so, what are they and how do they vary between geographic areas?

Other public funders

The study should provide evidence on the approach taken by a range of other public funders in England to identifying and, if relevant, contributing to the additional costs of operating in different geographic areas. The contractors should list the other public funders they plan to investigate and outline their broad approach to collecting and analysing evidence. They should also consider and report on the extent of any similarities and differences between higher education providers and the sectors supported by these other funders.

Regarding the identification of public funders, we have provided an initial list. Contractors may vary this, subject to HEFCE's agreement. Any variation will be considered and agreed on the basis of similarity in functions, geographical spread and availability of evidence.

Methodology

The contractor should describe the proposed methodology and how it will collect and test both qualitative and quantitative evidence in its tender. Please refer to the expectations outlined in the Quality Questionnaire in describing your methodology.

Deliverables

The contractor should deliver the following mandatory deliverables:

- Interim report including:
 - (i) Initial summary of findings including identification of data that the contractor's analysis was based on.
 - (ii) Description of potential caveats and outstanding needs for analysis and final reporting.
- Final report including:
 - (i) Description of methodology used to determine and collect evidence of relative costs and

¹² See: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c14054/>

benefits for higher education providers of operating in different geographical areas; and the approaches used to define those geographical areas.

- (ii) Description of approaches towards recognising area costs taken by other public funders and their rationale.
- (iii) Detailed analysis of data on relative costs and benefits for higher education providers of operating in different geographical areas, the drivers for costs and how costs and benefits may vary according to institutions' activities (to include teaching, research and other activities and any variations affected by academic discipline).
- (iv) Detailed analysis of the evidence collected on the approaches taken by other public funders in England.
- (v) Relevant supporting evidence, including a critical analysis of the strength of that evidence and any caveats about the conclusions that might be drawn from it.
- (vi) Conclusions, in relation to all parts of the requirement in this part 6 of the specification.
- (vii) Executive summary.

HEFCE normally publishes reports of consultancy studies. The contractor will be supplied with HEFCE's writing guide for external writers.

HEFCE will establish an internal steering group to oversee this project. Contractors will be expected to report to the steering group at regular intervals during the study to update on progress and this may be both in writing and through attendance at meetings. We anticipate at least three such meetings, to include an initiation meeting and ones to discuss the interim and draft final reports. In addition, the contractors will be required to keep HEFCE updated as necessary (by phone or email) on progress and issues arising on a weekly basis.

7. Timetable

HEFCE expects work on this study to commence in December 2016 and to conclude in April 2017. On this timetable the successful contractor will be required to:

- Attend an initial meeting with HEFCE in the week commencing 14 December or 19 December 2016 to confirm requirements.
- Attend a mid-way point meeting discussing progress to that date in February 2017 either by phone or in person.
- Submit an interim report with indicative analysis and conclusions by 13 March 2017.
- Submit a draft final report by 27 March 2017.
- Submit a final report by 24 April 2017.

The tender should demonstrate how the contractor will meet the reporting requirements and overall timescale.

It is expected that the successful contractor will liaise with HEFCE throughout the period of the study, when needed, agree variations to the methodology, and ensure that outputs are delivered to HEFCE's satisfaction.

Section 5 – Evaluation of Bids

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

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

To maintain a high degree of rigour in the evaluation of your bid, a process of moderation will be undertaken to ensure consistency by all evaluators.

After moderation 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	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information Exemptions
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
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 UK SBS has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this Mini Competition. UK SBS considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.

Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Price	AW5.2	Price	20%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Methodology and Approach	50%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Resources, skills and expertise of the project team	15%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Quality assurance arrangements and ability to comply with the specification requirements	15%

Evaluation of criteria

Non-Price elements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

0	The Question is not answered or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.

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

All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that the final score returned may be different as there will be multiple evaluators and their individual scores after a moderation process 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 50

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 50

Your final score will $(60+60+50+50) \div 4 = 55$

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.ukpbs.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.
- 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 Mini Competition. You should note that typically 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 your customer is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every customer'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 and concise 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 check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

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

DO NOT

- 7.12 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.
- 7.13 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.
- 7.14 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.
- 7.15 Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Customer to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you.
- 7.16 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or Customer staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.17 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.
- 7.18 Do not offer UK SBS or Customer staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.
- 7.19 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.
- 7.20 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.
- 7.21 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.
- 7.22 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.

Some additional guidance notes

- 7.23 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool may be submitted to Crown Commercial Service (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service), Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 7.24 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.
- 7.25 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.26 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.27 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.28 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of UK SBS.
- 7.29 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.
- 7.30 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.
- 7.31 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.32 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 Mini Competition Bidders are agreeing that their Bid and Contract may be made public
- 7.33 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.34 Bidders may only amend the Special terms if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract and UK SBS fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified we may reject your Bid.
- 7.35 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.
- 7.36 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.37 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Emptoris e-sourcing tool.

- 7.38 Bidders should note that if they are successful with their proposal UK SBS reserves the right to ask additional compliancy checks prior to the award of any Call Off Contract. In the event of a Bidder failing to meet one of the compliancy checks UK SBS may decline to proceed with the award of the Call Off Contract to the successful Bidder.
- 7.39 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
- 7.40 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

For these purposes, UK SBS may disclose within Government any of the Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Bidder to UK SBS during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this Mini Competition consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

- 7.41 From 2nd April 2014 the Government is introducing its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme to replace the current Government Protective Marking System (GPMS). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC from 2nd April 2014. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

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

UK SBS reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this Mini Competition to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this Mini Competition 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](#)
- [Tenders Electronic Daily](#)

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