

## **Monitoring and Evaluation Call-off Contract - Supplier engagement event – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

### **Q&A**

Q. Has the expected size and share of contracts been decided?

A. Current thinking is that individual projects would be around £50,000 - average size, but vary in either direction. Some may be rapidly delivered or slightly slower.

Q. To what extent will the team at BEIS coordinate with contractor to sense-check the size and nature of projects before launching official request which has 5 days turnaround.

A. BEIS would definitely want to talk to the appointed contractor about what's realistic. For first few projects, we would want to have early conversations to ensure the project brief is right.

Q. If the call-off does come out, when do you expect that to be?

A. BEIS expect 2 weeks minimum after this event before launching the tender. This is to allow teams to sign up for the new DPS. All dependent on feedback today and decision following this event.

Q. Is the winning supplier (or consortium) committing to deliver all of the projects that BEIS is looking to commission under this contract?

A. BEIS would need to check the wording of the contract, but in principle this is not in the spirit of the contract we wish to put in place.

We can't force contractors to do anything but if we put a project to you that's so challenging, and it can't be done (or budget so high that we wouldn't want) then we are open to the feedback.

The key point is to distinguish this from a framework. Under a framework all potential contractors can bid if an opportunity comes up you bid that is of interest. In contract, we are looking for someone we can put projects to and they get going.

Q. Do you have an idea of what volume of different types of M&E plan expecting consortium over a 12-month period.

A. Clarification – this contract isn't just about M&E plans, it broader as specified in the potential activities.

Based on our assumption of average project size being £50,000, over 12 months this gives 15 projects. So every couple of months coming to contractor feels right. The larger the projects, more likely to use separate evaluation contractor.

Q. Interested in rationale for a single contractor / consortium for the contract. Have been on other call offs which up to 2/3 contractors which could give you more flexibility.

A. Clarified this question is about why we have decided to appoint one contractor, rather than appointing several and doing a mini-competition.

BEIS have considered this. One of main barriers for M&E activities is time (particularly planning). The longer the time we have for assessment process is we lose the value of this. There are also benefits to consistently working with one contractor to build up consistency in work and expectations.

Q. Have you thought about risk balancing between lead and sub-contractors? Who takes the risk if a specialist sub-contractor can't deliver in required time frame but lead contractor has said yes.

A. We'd follow normal lead contractor approach where the lead is responsible for all work delivered under the contract, any work they decide to outsource to a sub-contractor would still

be the responsibility of the lead. In a consortium this would be set out in the way the consortium is setup.

Q. Just getting my head around the £50,000 average budget. If you were to separately commission an evaluation it would be a lot higher. So how much of the scoping is in the £50k?

A. To clarify, the assumed £50k budget would never include all of the activities listed in the specification. It would be one. Longer evaluations will always be separately commissioned and this contract is support and wrap around existing evaluation activity. We are not expecting anyone under this contract to deliver an end-to-end evaluation

Q. So what you want is access to a rapid response team to help overcome hurdles in M&E.

A. Yes, this is a good way to put it.

Q. Can you explain how you will make decision whether project is appropriate to go through this procurement route. For £50,000 size there are existing procurements. Why are BEIS not using existing mechanisms that give you access to wider range of suppliers? There is also a risk of biasing supplier for future commissions by giving one organisation an advantage.?

A. On the point around bias, the outputs of contract would be as transparent as possible. E.g. where M&E plan is developed this will need to be published alongside any future commissions. On the decision to use this route - There is value in organisations understanding how our business case process works (for example). In the same way we use long term evaluation contracts where appropriate, BEIS benefit from consistency. There will also be some cases where teams don't have the resource to do even the smaller competition routes, e.g. to write tenders and score bids.

In terms of how BEIS will decide which projects go through this call off contract? BEIS would be looking for teams to come to us and tell us why other procurement options don't work and why they need to use this rapid response approach.

In the context of BEIS's overall evaluation spend, this contract is relatively small, so hopefully not biasing the market too much.

Q. Can you set out any expectations on what may be in the final request. E.g. Number of project examples and length of project detail. And how long it would be live for.

A. We are currently aiming for a 4 weeks tender response window. We can do shorter under the chosen DPS, but it forces people into rushed answers. Especially with subcontractors, want to give people time to have conversations.

The tender will use BEIS' standard approach on pricing, providing details of project teams (including subcontractors and consortium), etc... Here the pricing and people will in part be based on day rates, and in part on example projects (will be asking for a budget). This allows us to realistically compare the resources that would be needed to deliver the type of projects we expect. Please be realistic with these - if the actual budget during the contract is 3x higher than a similar project included in the bid, will ask why.

We will ask for 3 example projects, currently thinking a 1-2 page response on each.

Q. I am an independent research evaluator, who would be interested in sub-contracting.

A. Thanks for flagging. The sign-up form for this event asked your permission to share contact details, that was precisely for this purpose. Please do reach out to each other to offer or request services.

Q. Given the proximity to end of financial year which is a key delivery crunch for many on this call I suspect, and the need for potentially complex consortia arrangements to be put in place, 4 weeks feels very much like a minimum time needed for responses - is there a realistic option that the procurement period could be longer?

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A. Thanks, that's one we'll take away and consider. The current timeline means bids not due until next FT, but we'll keep that in mind.

Q. Will there be word limits on each of the sections in the bid? Will there be a template/form to complete or will bidders have more flexibility in their response?

A: There won't be a template to complete. There will be word limits for each section to manage our workload. We will likely ask for CVs or similar information to be shared as attachments which don't contribute to word count.

Q. Is it possible for sub-contractors to be part of more than one bid.

A. We don't believe that there is anything in the procurement rules which prevent this.

MG Final summary - nobody has challenged the proposed specification as unreasonable or should be cut back. We'll take questions and feedback and make small refinements.

UKSBS keep everyone updated.

Please sign up to DPS.