

Census Transformation Programme

Notice of further market engagement activity and call for expressions of interest to attend forthcoming supplier meetings

Introduction

The Office for National Statistics ("**ONS**") is continuing to develop plans for future procurement activities associated with the planning and delivery of the 2021 Census (the "**Census**") for England and Wales.

The Census is part of a wider programme of activities that comprise the Census Transformation Programme (the "**Programme**"). Further information on ONS and the Programme can be found on our website: www.ons.gov.uk

As a part of the development of the procurement strategy for delivery of the Programme, ONS is undertaking a comprehensive market engagement exercise (the "**Exercise**") aimed at assisting ONS to better understand the supplier marketplace.

As was notified to suppliers when the Exercise was launched, the Exercise is being undertaken in two parts:

Part 1: General

The activities associated with Part 1 took place during spring and summer 2015, and consisted of:

- A supplier briefing (the "**Briefing**") that was delivered by ONS to all interested supplier organisations in May 2015. The Briefing was attended by 300 people representing 190 organisations.
- A supplier survey (the "**Survey**") that ONS undertook in order to gauge the levels of general market appetite amongst suppliers wanting to assist ONS with delivery of the Programme. The Survey resulted in engagement with over 500 organisations, with some 300 returning completed forms.

In November 2015, ONS published a final report on the key findings arising from the Part 1 activities, which included a list of all organisations that participated in Part 1. Copies of both the final report and all information shared with suppliers during Part 1 can be downloaded from ONS's electronic tendering portal (the "**Portal**"), on the following link: <https://in-tendhost.co.uk/ons.aspx/BuyerProfiles>

Part 2: Specific

- Part 2 commenced in February 2016 with a series of further supplier briefings that were held to update suppliers both on the feedback that ONS had obtained during Part 1, and the emerging procurement plans for the Programme. All information shared with suppliers during Part 2 can also be downloaded from the Portal, on the link above.

To date, the information obtained from suppliers by ONS has been used to help inform specific category procurement plans.

ONS is now developing detailed plans for sourcing the products and services required by the Programme, and is now seeking to continue Part 2 of the Exercise and engage further with suppliers on specific requirements that ONS may have in the future.

Publication of further information

ONS has recently published an Operations Overview document, which provides suppliers with the latest understanding that ONS has on the future procurement needs for the Programme, as well as a Supplier Information Document that provides supplier organisations with details of how ONS will procure its future needs.

Both of these documents are available for download (as PDF files) on the Portal and can be accessed freely by any interested organisation via the 'Supplier Guidance' section of the Portal on the following link: <https://in-tendhost.co.uk/ons.aspx/Home>

Next steps

The aims and objectives for the next steps in this part of the Exercise are:

1. to ensure that ONS update all suppliers on the future Programme needs;
2. for ONS to be able engage with suppliers and discuss the solutions presently available within the marketplace for specific parts of ONS's future needs (so as to help ONS further progress the development of requirements documents for these specific parts);
3. for ONS to receive information from suppliers on their approach to key topics that ONS require further information on (including package scope, delivery schedules, market / supplier capacity, key risks, use of innovation) in order to conclude development of ONS's detailed procurement plans and commercial strategy;
4. for ONS to be able 'test' certain assumptions that ONS may have made within the emerging package procurement plans with relevant suppliers (including those assumptions relating to scheduling, periods of time required for implementation / mobilisation, management of supplier interfaces and critical dependencies).

The next steps in this part of the Exercise will comprise a series of one-to-one meetings with suppliers (the "**Supplier Meetings**") covering a specific package of the Programme (the "**Specific Package**", as described below) that will take place in London during winter 2016. Details of the proposed Supplier Meetings, and how suppliers express an interest in taking part with the Supplier Meetings, are provided below.

Specific Package

At the present time, ONS is proposing to talk with suppliers who may be interested in delivering the Specific Package, described as follows:

Technical Consultancy and Design Services ("**TCaDS**")

Several organisations that may be able to provide ONS with ongoing technical consultancy and design services during the delivery of the Programme. The organisations may be required to deliver high-quality and impartial advisory services to the various project delivery teams within the Programme. This may include the identification of innovative market-driven solutions and recommendations to ONS on key issues.

ONS are investigating establishing a framework agreement that may comprise up to three lots, each of which will focus on a sector area of expertise, briefly described as follows:

- *Lot 1: People:* delivery of technical consultancy and specialist advisory services relating to staff and HR management issues across the Programme, including (but not limited to) recruitment, payroll services, human resources, training, equality and diversity, staff and organisational development and strategic planning.
- *Lot 2: Digital and Technology Consultancy Services:* delivery of technical consultancy and specialist advisory services, new technologies and digital solutions. To enable major business improvements across the Programme, including (but not limited to) data security, digital communications, information assurance, data management, enterprise architecture, agile software development and business continuity.
- *Lot 3: Logistics and General Programme Support:* delivery of technical consultancy and specialist advisory services concerning logistics and facilities management issues across the Programme including (but not limited to) forecasting, planning, stock control, delivery management, assetising, printing, publication and secure storage.

Supplier Meetings

ONS recognise that the requirements for each lot may be provided by a single supplier, joint venture or a consortium.

ONS is keen to meet with suppliers interested in tendering for and / or delivering any of the lots (either as a single supplier, joint venture or consortium). ONS wishes to understand the depth of knowledge, expertise and practical experience which suppliers may have of the management and/or delivery of all of the services in the areas listed above.

Potential suppliers are invited to give feedback on the following topics:

- the proposed Lots;
- the breadth of scope;
- potential delivery models;
- different fee structures – fixed costs, capped costs, time and materials, incentivisation/risk and reward.

ONS proposes to make representatives of the Programme available in London in order to host in-person meetings with interested supplier organisations on the following dates:

- **Lots 1 and 3:** on Tuesday 15th November 2016;
- **Lot 2:** on Wednesday 16th November 2016.

Registration to attend one of the meetings on the dates listed above should be made by email **by no later than 5:00 pm BST on Monday 7th November 2016** (the “**Response Deadline**”) to ONS at the following email address:

census2021.transformation.programme@ons.gov.uk

Within the email, interested suppliers should provide:

- confirmation of which lot(s) they are interested in;
- a brief outline of the services they are able to provide (taking note of the requirements of the Specific Package described above) on no more than one side of A4 paper;
- the supplier's preference for dates on which they would like to meet ONS.

Further notes on registration for and format of the Supplier Meetings

All emails expressing an interest in attending the Supplier Meetings on the Specific Package should be received by ONS at the email address by the Deadline. Emails received by ONS after the Deadline may not be considered by ONS.

The Supplier Meetings will be held at a location to be confirmed in London. ONS will confirm the date and time allocated to a supplier (along with the location) for one of the Supplier Meetings by Friday 11th November 2016. Whilst ONS will seek to accommodate suppliers order of preference for the date to attend the Supplier Meetings, the date and time at which ONS will make themselves available to meet with a supplier will be made at the sole discretion of ONS.

Attendance by suppliers at the Supplier Meetings will be limited to three individual persons per supplier. Each Supplier Meeting will last no longer than 60 minutes.

In the event that ONS receives a larger number of requests to attend the Supplier Meetings than can be accommodated by ONS on the dates listed above, ONS reserves the right to review the information provided by the supplier in their email and decide which suppliers ONS considers most-suited to deliver all of the scope of the Specific Package described above.

Additional Information

The purpose of this notice is to notify supplier organisations of the further planned activities of the Exercise, and the notice does not indicate or confirm any future or forthcoming procurement exercise, activity or of any individual procurement action.

As a part of ONS's compliance with its obligations under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the "**2015 Regulations**"), it is ONS's future intention to publish a further report (the "**Part 2 Report**") which shall include the key outcomes and conclusions of each of the one- to- one Supplier Meetings. The purpose of the Part 2 Report is to ensure that all suppliers, including those which did not attend Supplier Meetings, are competing on a level playing field in the subsequent procurement.

The Part 2 Report will include all information which is provided by suppliers at Supplier Meetings and may also include the names of those supplier organisations (and NOT the individual persons) that take part in the Exercise. Suppliers are asked to note this and any implications this may have on commercial confidentiality before registering their interest.

The Exercise is NOT a pre-qualification or selection exercise and is NOT part of any pre-qualification or selection process that may apply to any future potential procurement. The Exercise is intended to act as an awareness and information gathering exercise offering an opportunity for suppliers to advise the extent to which they potentially are able to provide some or all of the services that ONS may require, in order to help ONS with its future commissioning intentions.

An expression of interest in attending a Supplier Meeting is no indication of a commitment to participate in any tender or procurement process, and as such it does not infer any preferential or special status on those organisations who do submit an interest.

ONS is also working with other agencies over the delivery of censuses in Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that any contract to provide some or all of the services sourced via a procurement commenced pursuant to the Notice may be made available by ONS for use by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.