Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of the Medical Research Council (MRC)

Subject MRC Review of the MRC-DFID Concordat

Sourcing reference number UK SBS BLOJEU-CR17115MRC

UKSBS
Shared Business Services

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

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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 Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for Contracting Authorities for 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

Medical Research Council (MRC)

The Medical Research Council is a publicly-funded organisation dedicated to improving human health.

The organisation supports research across the entire spectrum of medical sciences, in universities and hospitals, in its own units, centres and institutes in the UK, and in our units in Africa.

Supporting scientists

- Around 5,700 research staff are supported by the MRC, either employed directly in our institutes and units or funded through grants and fellowships.
- We spent £86m on training awards for postgraduate students and fellows in 2011/12, including those in the MRC's own institutes and units.
- At March 2012 there were around 1,900 MRC-funded PhD students and around 400 MRC fellows in higher education institutes and MRC research establishments.

Research examples

- The benefits of MRC research have a national and global impact; from infections in Africa, stem cell advances that can potentially combat brain and heart diseases and improvements in the design of tests for treatments. As well as more and better healthcare, medical research can lead to wider impacts; many millions more lives saved, a vastly improved quality of life and hence a more productive workforce and economic benefits to nations.
- MRC researchers have found markers for cancer cells that may help detect thousands of new cases of cancer a year. The markers are already part of an MRC-developed device that screens for cancer of the oesophagus, are being trialled for cervical cancer screening and could potentially be used in a test for bowel cancer.
- The NHS newborn hearing screening programme, introduced in 2002, improves the early detection of hearing impairment in babies, allowing earlier and more effective treatment for the 900 babies born each year in the UK with permanent hearing loss.
- An estimated 73,000 adults are living with HIV in the UK, according to 2006 figures, but around a third of those people haven't been diagnosed and don't know they're infected. Black and ethnic minority populations accounted for just over half of all 7,000 new cases in 2006. Among many other aspects of HIV research, such as the molecular basis of the condition, treatments and diagnosis, MRC scientists are also researching social and behavioural factors.

http://www.mrc.ac.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	Medical Research Council (MRC) Polaris House, North Star Ave Swindon SN2 1FL
3.2	Buyer name	Jenny Stratton
3.3	Buyer contact details	Research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£160,000.00 ex 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 will result in the Bid not being considered.**

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	Monday 11th December 2017 Location: Contracts Finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Emptoris messaging system	Friday 12th January 2018 14.00
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	Tuesday 16th January 2018
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	Monday 22nd January 2018 14.00
3.10	Anticipated selection and the selections of Bids notification date	Monday 19th February 2018
3.11	Anticipated Award date	Monday 19th February 2018
3.12	Anticipated Contract Start date	Thursday 22nd February 2018
3.13	Anticipated Contract End date	Tuesday 22nd May 2018
3.14	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

Background

The MRC and the Department for International Development (DfID) have a Concordat agreement to support UK-led biomedical and public health research tackling the priority health problems of poor people in developing countries.
https://www.mrc.ac.uk/funding/science-areas/international-global-health-research/funding-partnerships/mrc-DfID-concordat/

The current agreement (2013-2018) pledges £90m (to which DfID is contributing up to £41m) to invest in areas of research where DFID and MRC have shared interests. In the current MRC-DFID Concordat portfolio around 200 projects have been live at any point. Expected outputs from the concordat include:

1. High quality biomedical and health research (including clinical trials) with a focus on translational and implementation research, relevant to low and middle income countries. This research can include translational and implementation research; public health, health services and health systems research.

2. High quality treatment and prevention research (including clinical trials), into HIV and AIDS, TB, malaria and other neglected tropical diseases, conducted in low income countries with matched funding through the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP).

3. Capacity development activities to strengthen the scientific research base for both individuals and institutions, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, including the African Research Leadership scheme.

The high quality scientific evidence generated from activities supported by the Concordat is intended to be used by national, regional and global decision makers to inform policies and practises that affect people living in low and middle income contexts.

To encourage and improve the links between research, outcomes and impact, prospective project leaders are required to provide a consideration of the process to impact as part of their grant proposal. A specific component of the proposal was introduced to encourage project teams to explore, from the outset, how to plan, deliver, and disseminate the research knowledge generated, to increase the likelihood that the intended outcomes and impacts are achieved or exceeded. These statements are now an essential component of all research proposals submitted across the research councils.

Role of the MRC
The MRC has a pivotal role in the Concordat. It is the sole administrator, providing the governance, grant making, and back-office administrative processes for the portfolio of Concordat-funded activities. DfID has funded research through the DfID-MRC Concordat for over 20 years; key to this programme is the strong yet flexible partnership between DFID and the MRC.

Aims and Objectives of the Project

This external review will be commissioned by the MRC on behalf of both MRC and DfID. Its key purpose is to review the performance and added value of the Concordat between 2013 and 2018.

The review will assess the extent to which the Concordat continues to be an effective means of supporting high quality scientific research and research capacity strengthening, as demonstrated through their relevance to the needs of LMICs and the impact of their outcomes on policy and/or practise. In addition, the review should consider the added value to MRC and DfID in partnering in this activity.

The review should build on the findings of the 2011/12 light touch review (Annex1) and evaluate:

- the spectrum and quality of research and capacity strengthening activities supported,
- the outcomes delivered (including new knowledge, evidence and capacity strengthening outcomes etc.) and their relevance to LMIC health priorities,
- The nature, range and timeliness of the impacts achieved. This could include: the time taken for the impacts to be realised, and estimates of the reach and significance (geographical impact, QALYs realised, economic returns generated etc.) and the key factors (activities, engagements partnerships, stakeholders etc.) that may facilitate or restrict achieving research impact,
- The added value for MRC and DfID in working under the Concordat agreement.

Specific activities and topics for review

Concordat overall performance new knowledge / evidence / capacity strengthening and value for money

- To carry out an evaluation of the overall performance and added value of the DFID-MRC Concordat, during the current funding cycle (2013-2018). The review should consider the following:
    - Does the Concordat mechanism result in the production of high quality research, with likelihood of impact in LMICs? What is the range of research supported and the nature of outcomes and impacts?
    - Does the Concordat mechanism result in research capacity strengthening with likelihood of sustainable impact? What are the range of capacity strengthening activities delivered? Which research capacity strengthening activities are the most effective? What are the outputs and outcomes?
    - Does the concordat provide an effective operational, management and governance framework for MRC and DfID, delivering good value for money for each organisation? How could this be improved? Which metrics are most suited to measuring this?
    - Does the concordat mechanism enable a productive, effective and co-operative relationship between DFID and MRC? *What are the benefits to each organisation? Is there complementarity/ synergy? How does the concordat feature in the UK's reputation and international leadership/ influence? How* could this be improved?

- Is the Concordat still relevant, distinctive and providing added value, given the changes in the ODA research funding landscape in the UK since 2015?

Concordat success in supporting research which has impact

- To assess the success of the concordat in supporting research, or research capacity strengthening activities that translate into impact, and to understand the nature and timeliness of the impacts delivered. This will include an assessment of output, outcome and impact data from the online platform 'ResearchFish' and other available evidence. This assessment providing insight into:
  - the range and nature of the research outputs, capacity strengthening achievements and impacts that have been delivered through the concordat portfolio, and
  - the time taken for this research to have an impact.
- To evaluate how well the information on the research evidence to impact process provided in the original grant proposals, including the specific statements, predict/reflect the final route and time taken in delivering impact. Using samples of the range of concordat projects funded this should include an assessment of:
  - to what extent the grant proposals anticipate the range and nature of outcomes and impacts delivered from the research/ or capacity strengthening activities supported
  - whether it is possible to identify key factors which inform any differences between predicted and actual outcomes/impact observed (e.g. unexpected/ unanticipated outcome, changed research/policy environment, timeframe to outcome /impact, geographical range of impact etc.)
  - any key themes (dissemination methods / partnerships/ stakeholder relations / funder support, etc.) across projects that may explain what facilitates or constrains the 'research evidence to impact' process.
- To generate case studies that clearly outline the research to impact process demonstrated by the above analysis, highlighting the key enablers and barriers to research impact. These case studies will be used to share the learning from this review.

Final Report and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the review, the final report should provide recommendations on the following:

- The effectiveness of the concordat in supporting relevant research and research capacity strengthening activities that have likelihood of impact on policy and practise in LMICs, regionally and globally
- The range and scope of research funded, the nature of the project outcomes (including capacity strengthening) and the impacts delivered
- What lessons can be learned regarding opportunities and timelines for monitoring and evaluating outcomes and impact.
- Any key themes emerging from the 'research evidence to impact process' which MRC/DfID should consider in improving the guidance and support offered to applicants / investigators

- The partnership benefits of the Concordat mechanism in the current UK global health funding landscape and in UK contribution to international leadership and influence.

Suggested Methodology

It is anticipated that this review will be carried out through desk reviews, interviews and visits.

Mixed methods analyses using

Key inputs from

- **Desk based reviews** - documents / literature/ databases
- **Semi-structured interviews** with key UK and international informants from relevant project awardees and stakeholder groups (global health experts/policy makers/funders). We suggest around 40 semi structured interviews. These will be carried out to inform both aspects of the review. We anticipate the majority of these will be carried out via phone and skype – with the possibility of face to face interviews that can be carried out during visits to project/impact sites.
- **Visits** (project sites and / or relevant policy makers)

Key Outputs

Review Report incorporating

- **Executive Summary**
- **Key points and recommendations**
- **High quality data visualisations**
- **Case Studies / Narratives**
  We suggest around 6-10 case studies that deepen understanding of the key factors identified through the cross project analysis. They should clearly describe the pathway from research to impact, and will reflect the key factors identified through this review as important for research impact. The case studies will provide a communication tool for sharing the learning generated about the research to impact process. These may be incorporated as guidance for prospective applicants in preparing the pathway to impact statements.

A. DFID-MRC Concordat performance and value for money review

The review should examine the following questions:

1. Does the Concordat mechanism result in: the production of high quality, relevant research and research capacity strengthening activities with likelihood of impact?

What examples are available? In assessing this issue the following should be taken into account:

- quality of the science?
- quality of research capacity building?
- relevance to the health of developing societies?
- how the countries themselves are involved?
- the balance of risk?

Evaluators anticipated to use

- *MRC documentation, ResearchFish data, project reports and other available evidence to identify research priorities, research supported, research outputs, countries involved.*
- *Interviews and / or site visits with global health research experts (i.e. project awardees, stakeholders) to understand evidence gaps and research priorities,*

2. Are the organisational, administrative and governance structures employed by the MRC delivering value for money in terms of the management of the concordat portfolio, the research supported and the outcomes delivered? How could this be improved? Which metrics are most suited to measuring this?

- *Evaluators should refer to documentation including https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67479/DFID-approach-value-money.pdf*
- *Evaluators should identify the MRC mechanisms for management, decision-making and oversight of the different support mechanisms covered by the Concordat funding – (document review)*
- *If required, evaluators could interview relevant MRC staff and decision-makers, other funders and the research community.*

3. Do DFID and MRC have a productive, effective and co-operative relationship? Are there ways in which it could be improved?

- *Evaluators should review the DFID-MRC engagement activities and processes for working together (document review) and if/where needed, interview relevant DFID and MRC leads for the Concordat.*

4. How have the recent changes in the ODA research landscape in UK (e.g. introduction and/or extension of Newton Fund, Ross Fund Portfolio and Global Challenges Research Fund) affected the Concordat engagement? How does the joint working between DFID and MRC help to maintain the UK's reputation and international influence?

- *Evaluators should carry out a rapid evidence assessment (to include grey literature, e.g. media articles that reference the Concordat).*
- *Evaluators could interview the UK and international global health research community (to understand the UK's reputation and the Concordat's contribution to this)*

B. Review of research outcomes and impact and the research to impact process

It is anticipated that a sample of research projects will be used from the MRC-DFID Concordat portfolio during the current (and previous) funding cycle for this review.

1. Assess the success of the concordat in supporting research, or research capacity strengthening activities that translate into impact, what is the nature, range and timeliness of the outcomes and impacts achieved.

   Evaluators anticipated to use
   - *MRC documentation, ResearchFish analysis, project reports and publicly available literature and evidence to assess the breadth of outcomes and impacts achieved, in context of concordat activities.*
   - *Interviews and / or site visits with global health research and policy experts (i.e. grant awardees, stakeholders) to understand full breadth of outcomes and impact*

2. Assess key features of the research to impact process in the context of concordat activities, including how well grant proposals align with the actual process and timeframe

   - identify key features of the research undertaken which contributed to the research to impact process observed
   - any key themes (early planning, dissemination methods / partnerships/ stakeholder relations / nature of support etc.) that may explain what facilitates or constrains the 'research evidence to impact' process.

   Evaluators anticipated to
   - *Review MRC documentation, projects reports, other evidence*
   - *Review literature - further evidence about what is effective in planning research that has likelihood of impact. The review should include learning from the previous MRC/DFID light touch review (Annex 1).*

Evaluators could interview UK and international global health research community, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders

Deliverables

The Medical Research Council are responsible for oversight of this review.

Deliverables that should be provided throughout the review by the review team should include:

- Clear description of research methodologies to be used (before implementation)
- Regular updates on emerging findings and project progress
- Early presentations to share findings with DFID and MRC, including PowerPoint.
- Quality assured final report (see below for further detail)
- Case study narratives (see below for further detail)

Review Report

1. The **Review Report** should be a concise document that clearly sets out the main outcomes of the review and provides a short set of pertinent recommendations. The

report should not exceed 50 pages plus a number of relevant supporting annexes, including the **case study narratives**.

- Case studies should be concise narratives that clearly communicate the context and nature of the research activity supported, the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved. They should describe the research to impact process in the context of the particular project including the nature of the impact, the time taken to develop impact, the breadth of the impact, the key engagement partners and stakeholders necessary to deliver impact etc. They should emphasise what key factors either facilitated or constrained the research to evidence process, from the initial conception of the research. The case study should reflect how well this research to impact process was predicted in the original application.
- Each case study should be no longer than 2xA4 pages

2. There must be an **Executive Summary** cross-referenced to numbered paragraphs in the main text.
3. There is an expectation **of high quality data visualisation** throughout the report
4. It is expected that a **draft report** will be provided **3 weeks before** the contract end date, for consideration by MRC/ DFID
5. The review team will be responsible for providing **electronic copies of the draft report** to DFID and the MRC.
6. The review team will **amend the draft** in response to comments,
7. An electronic version of the **final report** will be required by the MRC and DFID. The final report should be produced no later than 48 hours before contract end date.
8. The final report should be shared by the review team with any interview participants that expressed an interest in seeing the final report.

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.

Annex 1

Annex 1 is the Interim (Light touch) Review of MRC/DFID Concordat Final Report. Document is included within the RFx Attachments tab in Emptoris.

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÷3 = 5.33)

Pass / fail criteria

Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	SEL3.11	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
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	AW4.1	Contract Terms
Commercial	AW4.2	Contract Terms 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	15%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Understanding the Environment	25%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Risk Management	15%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Methodology	20%
Quality	PROJ1.5	Project Team and Capability to Deliver	25%

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 = {weighting percentage} x {bidder's score} = 20% x 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) ÷ 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 x 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. Unless formally requested to do so by UK SBS e.g. Emptoris system failure

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 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 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.

7.16 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority 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 the Contracting Authority 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 must be submitted to Crown Commercial Service (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 as part of the evaluation process.

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 the Contracting Authority. / UKSBS.

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 ITQ 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 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.

7.35 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 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.

7.39 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, 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.

7.41 The Government is introducing 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