

SERDS Pre Market Engagement Questionnaire CQs and Responses

Question #	Question	Response
1	Is the completion of the questionnaire is necessary in order to receive the ITT?	<p>For information purposes, this is an early engagement opportunity only and therefore the Authority is not at the ITT Stage yet. Completion of this questionnaire will help the Authority with requirements setting and the popularity of this project in the market (along with seeing if there are any recommendations the market has around the proposed procurement). It should be noted that the market engagement for the SERDS Procurement is planned to consist of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 – Pre-Market Questionnaire (current stage) • Stage 2 – Industry Brief • Stage 3 (if used) – Request for Information (building on the previous Stages) • More Stages may be required, but this is the current plan.
2	Please could the authority confirm the clarification and submission deadline time?	Please note that the deadline for the submission of Stage 1 Clarification Questions by Suppliers for this Stage are the 8 th August and the deadline for the submission of a response to the Stage 1 Pre-Engagement Questionnaire is the 14/08/2024 at 1700hrs
3	Please could Defra reveal the name of the incumbent supplier?	The Authority can reveal that the current supplier is Hitachi Solutions UK Limited
4	Additionally, are Defra able to reveal the value of the previous contracts?	The Authority cannot give specific details around value at this time but can confirm the previous contract was over £20M
5	The requirement clearly focuses on building upon Microsoft solutions, would you consider alternative COTS solutions that already provide similar solutions to Government and Regulatory Agencies that could equally meet the requirements that are set out in the document?	At this time, we are focused on maintaining consistency within our existing ecosystem, which is built around Microsoft solutions. This approach is integral to our strategy, ensuring seamless integration, ease of management, and alignment with our current technology stack. While we appreciate your suggestion regarding alternative COTS solutions, our current priority is to build upon the Microsoft platform as outlined in the requirements document. However, we value innovation

		and your interest in providing solutions to our needs, and we encourage you to stay in touch for any future opportunities where alternative solutions might be considered.
6	It would be good to understand the solutions that have already been completed under the previous SERDS procurement?	We will be providing a comprehensive overview of the solutions that were developed and implemented under the previous SERDS procurement during the supplier market engagement presentation. This will include insights into the scope, objectives, and outcomes of those solutions to give you a clear understanding of what has been accomplished so far.
7	The timetable only provides dates and not times, are there any time deadlines i.e. 17:00?	Please note that these have been included in the updated version of the Pre-Market Engagement Questionnaire.
8	Will ethical walls be put in place for the incumbent during the bidding process?	Ethical Walls are being put in place with the incumbent supplier
9	What security level clearances will staff working on different projects in scope need to have? Will there be restrictions on what could be delivered Offshore or Nearshore for each of the project areas?	<p>For staff working on the projects in scope, the minimum-security clearance required is BPSS (Baseline Personnel Security Standard) for all individuals involved. Additionally, anyone handling live data must have SC (Security Clearance).</p> <p>Regarding offshore and nearshore delivery, there will be restrictions based on the nature of the data and project requirements. While some work may be performed offshore or nearshore, this will be subject to approval by our Security team. Each project area will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate level of security and any geographical restrictions.</p> <p>We will provide further details and clarifications during the procurement process. If you have specific concerns, please feel free to raise them.</p>
10	Is there any third party Intellectual Property and ownership rights to be considered by bidders?	Apart from the Microsoft licenses for Azure DevOps (ADO) and PowerPlatform, there are no third-party intellectual property or ownership rights that need to be considered by bidders. All other components involved in the project will be subject to our standard terms regarding intellectual property and ownership.

		If there are any changes or additional considerations regarding third-party IP, we will communicate these details promptly during the procurement process.
11	Will any TUPE costs arising be fully or partially met by Defra?	This procurement is not in scope of TUPE and therefore costs will not be required. If this position changes, this will be reflected in the Invitation to Tender documents.
12	Will Transition costs be part of the scoring mechanism?	This has not been confirmed but it is likely that transition costs will make up a proportion of the Price Evaluation.
13	Please can you define what transition period means?	The Transition Period sees a list of activities conducted between the new supplier and the existing supplier to complete the following activities (this is an illustrative list and does not include all aspects of the transition period) is defined as the period taken for the new supplier to be onboarded, implement their team, governance, ways of working and processes (in line with contract requirements and their tender), and work with the existing supplier to understand the work completed to date, what is the work that needs to be taken on and developed, what is the knowledge to be transferred etc.
14	We understand that the current contract's framework is DOS5. Please can you clarify why DOS6 is not one of the options for the route to procurement	DOS6 has been discussed within the Authority and given the activities within the scope of the new procurement, the requirements for a longer term, and, internal strategic drivers, this route to market has been deemed to be unsuitable.
15	What is the expected value of the procurement?	This is currently being discussed internally and therefore there are no concrete decisions made at this time.
16	Annex A - P7 - DEFRA is looking for a partner to collaborate with over a longer term – ideally with an initial core period with resulting options. What does “an initial core period” refer to and what is meant by “resulting options”?	An initial core period describes the initial period of the contract (in this case, this has been suggested as “2 years” but may potentially change before the Invitation to Tender is issued). Resulting options are therefore the optional years that could be called off after this core period subject to approvals from the Authority.