



# Invitation to Quote

**Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)**

**Subject UK SBS Expert analysis of competitive project bids to the HEFCE Connecting Capability Fund**

**Sourcing reference number BLOJEU-CR17038HEFCE**

**UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)**  
[www.uksbs.co.uk](http://www.uksbs.co.uk)

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.  
Registered Office Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FF  
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**UKSBS**  
*Shared Business Services*

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## **Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services**

### **UK Shared Business Services**

UK SBS delivers shared business services to its owners; BEIS and its Partner Organisations.

We work behind the scenes, providing shared and specialist services to help reduce costs, improve quality and efficiency, to the benefit of UK taxpayers.

We provide HR & Payroll, Finance, Procurement, IT and Property Asset Management services to BEIS and its partner organisations – to enable our customers to focus on their core activities and make the most of their available budgets. Every day, we are supporting world-renowned scientists and researchers, policy makers and agencies that support UK jobs and growth, highlight UK science and innovation, and promote the UK as a global leader internationally. Our customers – the UK Research Councils, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and its partner organisations – are working on vital, life-changing projects ranging from Dementia Research, the Antarctic Research and UK Space programmes to the award winning UK Pavilion (the Hive) at the 2015 Milan Expo.

For more info, please visit our website: <http://www.ukpbs.co.uk/Pages/default.aspx>

## 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	<b>Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)</b>  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 - £100,000 (incl.VAT)
3.5	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	<b>All correspondence shall be submitted within the Emptoris e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Emptoris is available <a href="#">here</a>. 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.</b>

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	13th April 2017
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions should be received through Emptoris messaging system	21 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 14:00
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2017
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2017 14:00
3.10	Anticipated rejection of unsuccessful Bids date	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
3.11	Anticipated Award date	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2017

3.12	Anticipated Contract Start date	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
3.13	Anticipated Contract End date	February 2018
3.14	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

## Section 4 – Specification

### 1. Introduction

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) was established in June 1992 under the terms of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 as a non-departmental public body operating within a policy and funding context set by the Government. HEFCE assumed responsibility for funding higher education in England on 1 April 1993. 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.

Funding - we distribute public money to universities and colleges in England, incentivising excellence in research, learning and teaching and knowledge exchange.

Data and analysis - we collect, synthesise and benchmark data to provide a unique authoritative voice on higher education.

Regulation and assurance - we are the lead regulator for higher education in England. We respect the autonomy of providers and protect the interest of students.

Policy - we inform, develop and implement government policy to benefit the sector, students, and society.

### 2. Aims

#### **Government and HEFCE policy and priorities**

The Government confirmed in the 2016 Autumn Statement that additional funding for science/research of £100 million would be provided until 2020-21 to incentivise university collaboration in technology transfer and working with business. This funding – the Connecting Capability Fund (CCF) - is being allocated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

In January 2017, the Government published a green paper “Building our Industrial Strategy”. The strategy sets out some relevant priority areas for the CCF:

- the need for the UK to improve its performance in research commercialisation
- a role for universities (and other partners) to support businesses, to develop industrial and technological sector deals
- a role for universities to contribute to developing regional/local science and innovation strengths; and the value of clusters and networks of universities to drive growth across all of the UK.

Funding from the CCF for 2017-18 of £15M is being allocated by formula and is not the subject of this tender. This tender focusses on allocation of up to £85M from the

CCF for competitive projects.

The objectives of the CCF are:

- a. To strengthen the contribution of English HEIs to productivity and economic growth and to delivery of the objectives of the Government's Industrial Strategy, by:
- b. Enhancing effectiveness in use of the university knowledge base to deliver commercial and business applications and wider applications for the economy and society, through:
- c. Stimulating strategic higher education (HE)-HE collaborations across England which:
  - i. Delivers pooling of KE expertise and capabilities so that businesses and other users can access a range of KE offers or critical mass of knowledge.
  - ii. Builds capacity to provide cross-university responses to technological, industrial sectoral or inter-disciplinary challenges, or to regional alignments and challenges.
  - iii. Incentivises sharing of expertise in KE and commercialisation and dissemination of good practice across the HE sector.

CCF competitive funding is focussed on science/research priorities, will not support substantially KE-teaching focussed projects and must support work that is additional to KE activity already planned by universities. Expert work commissioned through this tender is intended to support new approaches to ensure that the CCF competition delivers key Government priorities.

A central focus of the CCF is collaboration between universities which enables pooling of KE expertise, building connecting capability and disseminating good practice.

The Government is intending to introduce wide ranging reforms to how the HE sector operates, which have now been set out in the HE White Paper and HE Bill. This includes changes to the landscape of agencies, introducing a new Office for Students (OfS) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). It is expected that the Connecting Capability Fund will be managed by HEFCE's knowledge exchange (KE) function which will become part of Research England within UKRI.

### **Aims of tender exercise**

HEFCE notified universities on 13 April that £85M for 2018-19 to 2020-21 was available for allocation through the CCF competitive element and issued a call for projects <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/Year/2017/201703/>

- In allocating the CCF competitive funding, HEFCE is concerned to allow universities up to three years to deliver complex collaborative projects. We aim to make all competitive CCF awards by early 2018, so that projects start to draw down funds from April 2018 and complete by March 2021. This necessitates a method of allocating funding then within fairly compressed timescales.

HEFCE is adopting the following approach to managing the CCF competition to meet these concerns:

- Appointing an expert steering/selection group.
- Allocating funding in two rounds with a development programme to support the second round.
- Appointing expert researchers to support the allocations process – the subject of this tender.

The researchers appointed will be expected to provide expert knowledge and advice on:

- Technological, inter-disciplinary, industrial sectoral and regional aspects to research commercialisation – the fit of bids to the objectives and priorities of the CCF.
- Whether bids propose exceptional KE activity and outcomes, and are likely to exemplify good practice in KE and in collaboration.
- Due diligence needed on complex proposals that may involve public and private funding mixes, unusual risks and innovative approaches.
- Consistency in treatment of bids of diverse kinds, including advice on a threshold standard to bids in the first round.

The main aims of the work being tendered are then:

- To deliver expert assessment and advice on CCF bids.
- Working with the HEFCE secretariat/project team, to provide support to the CCF steering group and deliver a bidding development programme.

### **3. Objectives**

It is proposed to operate the Fund through two rounds of bidding, an initial round to test guidance and criteria, and then a second round with supporting development work running in parallel with the first round. The work tendered will include support to both rounds of bidding, addressing the following objectives.

1. To devise and deliver on a robust methodology for assessment of first round bids submitted to the Fund, including:

- To produce an assessment methodology, focussing work of expert researchers on key criteria relevant to their expertise (the steering group and HEFCE KE team will also be involved in assessing bids). Agreement on format for outputs and roles in handling bid selection at the steering group meeting (for example, scoring methodologies and moderation).
- Agreement with HEFCE on any additional information that should be requested from bidders prior to panel meeting.
- Final assessment report to be produced and presented to the steering group, including:
  - Scores and detailed appraisal information for each bid, with reasons and recommendations on any specific terms and conditions to be attached and/or additional information to be requested post-selection.
  - Comment on a threshold standard to first round bids.
  - Comment on changes to guidance and criteria for main bidding round to best deliver the objectives of the CCF and value for money.
  - Advice on overall programme management, such as considerations for HEFCE in relation to first round bid dissemination and overall evaluation design.

2. To support HEFCE in the second round development programme, including leading two events for potential bidders and assisting HEFCE in giving feedback on expressions of interest.

3. To deliver on the assessment methodology for the second round of bidding. The methodology in the second bidding round will build upon the experience of the first round. Work to be conducted will be as in 1, refined in light of experience of the first round and second round development work, and likely with a greater number of bids.

#### **4. Background to the requirement**

The Connecting Capability Fund is intended to build upon established methods for the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) managed by HEFCE, particularly HEIF rounds 1-3 which included allocations through competitive projects. The approach to this work though will need to address new challenges in terms of more targeted focus of funding and higher expectations of delivering step change in collaboration in KE.

On 1 August 2016 we published a HEFCE document (HEFCE August 2016/16) outlining policy and method for formula HEIF funding going forward. KE formula allocations are made annually by HEFCE, against an approved institutional five-year KE strategies from 2016-17. We expect to confirm decisions on approval of strategies and 2017-18 institutional allocations individually to HEIs in April, to be announced publicly in May. This will include handling of any formula allocation from the CCF. Handling of any formula funding HEIF or CCF is excluded from this tender.

The Government tasked HEFCE in the 2014 Science and Innovation strategy to develop a KE performance framework. All bids supported through the CCF should

demonstrate good practice in KE, and may contribute to the KE framework by providing exemplars.

Annual monitoring of HEIF allocation spend is conducted as part of the HEFCE Annual Monitoring Statement (AMS) exercise and it is likely that the monitoring of CCF projects will also be undertaken as part of this annual monitoring – monitoring is excluded from this tender.

HEFCE is likely to commission a specific evaluation of the performance of the CCF in delivering a step change in embedding university-university collaboration in KE, drawing on insights from CCF competitive process including work described in this tender.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The expert researchers will be responsible for:

- conducting assessment of all bids – both rounds
- providing assessment reports for both rounds; attendance and support for the CCF steering group
- assisting HEFCE with analysis of expressions of interest for second round development programme to provide generic feedback (for all HEIs expressing interest, not individual HEI feedback) on activities that are in scope of CCF and on what makes a good bid; presenting at two bidder events
- providing advice on further information to be requested from bidders (due diligence and post award, specific terms and conditions) and on design of evaluation.

Decisions on funding of bids will be made by the HEFCE Board, following recommendations of the CCF steering group.

Decisions on programme management, monitoring and evaluation will be made by the HEFCE Executive, following recommendations of the CCF steering group.

The overall process for support of the steering group, allocation of HEFCE grant and CCF programme management will be managed by the KE Team at HEFCE, by a designated Project Management team/CCF secretariat (Alice Frost – tel 0117 9317101, email [a.frost@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:a.frost@hefce.ac.uk) and Jo Allatt – tel 0117 9317133, email [j.allatt@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:j.allatt@hefce.ac.uk)). The team will be responsible for:

- setting up meetings of the steering group
- convening, despatching papers to and keeping records of the CCF steering group
- analysis of second round expressions of interest and any individual HEI feedback needed
- arrangement and administration of second round development events
- approval processes within HEFCE
- communications, including award letters, with universities
- taking forward the programme management, monitoring, evaluation post allocations phase

## **5.Scope**

### **Included in the scope of the tender**

- Devising and delivering on an expert assessment methodology for both bidding rounds.
- Providing expert advice on programme management, including selection and post award/due diligence, and design of evaluation.
- 
- Providing expert advice in the second round development programme, generic feedback and leading two bidder events
- Attending steering group meetings to present reports findings
- Producing a written final report and presentation for HEFCE/the CCF steering group for both rounds.

### **Excluded in the scope of the tender**

- Initial design of the guidance and criteria for the CCF (published by HEFCE in April 2017)
- Use of CCF for HE sector wide enhancements.
- Programme management beyond the end of the allocations process.
- Conduct of monitoring and evaluations of the CCF or HEIF more broadly.
- Direct communication with HEIs

## 6. Requirement

### Overview of requirement

The outline of the policies and objectives of the Fund, including guidance and criteria for the first round, was published by HEFCE on 13 April 2017. See HEFCE 2017/03.

The work will have the following mandatory requirements:

#### 1. Methodology

The researchers will need to agree with the HEFCE project team the methodology for assessing first round bids, including:

- Specific assessment criteria where the tenderers have expertise, and will add value to the assessments to be conducted by the steering group and the HEFCE KE team
- Scoring approach
- Format for reporting assessment results and other matters and presenting results to the CCF steering group
- Roles and responsibilities at the CCF steering group meeting, such as handling moderation.

#### 2. Assessment of first round bids

Conduct assessment of all bids using agreed methodology.

Advice to HEFCE on additional information to be requested from bidders in advance of the steering group meeting (for example, letters of support), to ensure that all information needed to make recommendations on awards is available at the meeting.

Provision of assessment report with:

- Scores with reasons for all bids
- And recommendations on specific terms and conditions, due diligence etc.
- Feedback to bidders if appropriate
- Advice on the threshold standard to fundable bids
- And changes to be made to guidance and criteria for the full bidding round.
- Views on first round dissemination and evaluation design.

The focus of work in the first round is particularly on assessing whether the guidance and criteria have been interpreted in ways leading to bids that represent value for money and are most likely to deliver the objectives for the Fund – and hence changes for the second round of bidding.

The researchers will need to attend the meeting of the CCF steering group

and present and discuss their findings. They will be expected to work with the HEFCE CCF secretariat to support decision-making on the day, for example, commenting on queries on particular bids assessed, scoring and moderation approaches.

The HEFCE secretariat will be responsible for:

- Arranging the steering group and its meetings
- recording decisions and recommendations of the steering group, and managing approval of minutes by the group
- securing final decisions from the HEFCE Board and Executive on first round bids to be funded, and amendments to the programme
- amending and issuing revised guidance and criteria and other programme management information for the full bid round
- writing to bidders with results, including feedback if appropriate and due diligence requirements, and finalising grant letters

3. Expert support to the second round development programme

- Assisting HEFCE in analysis of expressions of interest for the second round development programme to provide generic feedback to HEIs on what is in scope and what makes a good bid
- Leading two bidder development events, timing to be agreed with HEFCE in the period July-October 2017 as suits workloads

4. Assessment of bids in the second round

Work to be undertaken as in the first round, but reflecting experience and amendments to processes agreed with HEFCE at end of first round and in light of insights from second round development programme.

Across both bid rounds, the researchers may be asked to re-assess some bids in light of additional information in borderline situations.

Desirable

The researchers may be asked to comment/advise on:

- whether due diligence/further information submitted is satisfactory to release grant awards
- draft of the second round bidding guidance.
- how the exercise might be improved in future

Attendance at other meetings to discuss the conduct and approach of the fund.

## 7. Timetable

### Outline timetable for acceptance of institutional strategies, analysis of strategies and annual HEIF allocations

April 2017	Publish policy guidance and invitation for first round bids and expressions of interest for second round (this document).
Noon on 26 June 2017	Deadline for expressions of interest for second round.
Noon on Monday 10 July	Deadline for first round bids
Summer 2017	Meeting of Steering Group. Second round development partnership events and feedback.
September 2017	Second round guidance published.
Autumn 2017	Confirmation of first round awards by the HEFCE Board.
Mid November 2017	Deadline for second round bids (specific date to be confirmed in September guidance).
Early 2018	Meeting of Steering Group. HEFCE Board confirms all residual awards.
April 2018	All projects starting.

### **Terms and Conditions**

Bidders are to note that any requested modifications to UK SBS Terms and Conditions on the grounds of statutory and legal matters only, shall be raised as a formal clarification during the permitted clarification period.

## 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, the Customer and any specific external stakeholders UK SBS deem 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 ( $5+5+6 = 16 \div 3 = 5.33$ ))

Pass / fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	SEL1.3	Modern Slavery
Commercial	SEL1.4	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
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

Scoring criteria			
<b>Evaluation Justification Statement</b>			
In consideration of this particular requirement UK SBS has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this ITQ. 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	Approach	25%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	25%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Understanding the Environment	20%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan & Timescales	10%

## 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 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  $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

**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 ( $80/100 \times 50 = 40$ )

The lowest score possible is 0 even if the price submitted is more than 100% greater than the lowest price.

Once the evaluation process and due diligence is complete, should the result of the process result in a tied place(s) then the supplier(s) who scored the highest total in the Quality criterion shall be considered the successful supplier and shall be awarded the opportunity .

Should the above still result in a tie we will go to a secondary tie decision which will be who scored the highest total in the Price criterion (Question AW5.2) they shall be considered the successful supplier and shall be awarded the opportunity.

## **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.
- 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 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 (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 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 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 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 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 ITQ 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 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](#)
- [Tenders Electronic Daily](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)