



Invitation to Quote

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

Subject Contracting Authority **The Supply of Bibliometric Data**

Sourcing reference number **BLOJEU-CR17083MRC**

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

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UKSBS

Shared Business Services

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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	The Medical Research Council, Polaris House, Swindon, SN2 1ET
3.2	Buyer name	Rebecca Fish
3.3	Buyer contact details	research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	Up to £40,000 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 <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	21/07/2017 Contracts Finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Emptoris messaging system	03/08/2017
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	04/08/2017
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	10/08/2017 14:00
3.11	Anticipated selection and de selections of Bids notification date	21/08/2017
3.12	Anticipated Award date	21/08/2017
3.13	Anticipated Contract Start date	22/08/2017
3.14	Anticipated Contract End date	31/10/2017
3.15	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

Introduction

The Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC) are two of the UK's seven publicly funded Research Councils responsible for supporting, coordinating and promoting research, innovation and skills development in seven distinct fields.

The MRC 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 its units in Africa. The STFC supports an academic community of around 1,700 in particle physics, nuclear physics, and astronomy who work across the UK, Europe, Japan and the United States. In 2015/16 the MRC's gross research expenditure was £927.8m¹, whilst the STFC has a research portfolio of more than £444m across 777 grants²

A primary output from MRC and STFC funded research is the publication of journal articles and reviews. Approximately 10,000 such publications are produced each year, at least in part as a result of MRC support. STFC supports an academic community of around 1,700 in particle physics, nuclear physics, and astronomy including space science, who work at more than 100 universities and research institutes in the UK, Europe, Japan and the United States, including a rolling cohort of more than 900 PhD students. This generates around 8,000 new publications each year. Analysis of these publications can provide a useful view of part of the productivity and quality of funded research. The MRC and STFC are interested in the details of the publications arising from the research they fund, the fields of research these papers focus on, the way that these publications are cited by others, and how these results compare with the output from other countries and the output from specific research organisations.

Aims

The MRC and STFC regularly monitor, evaluate and report on successes and the outcomes, outputs and impact of the research they support. To better understand how funded research leads to economic, societal and academic impact, all MRC and STFC-funded researchers are required to provide feedback on the impact of their work via an online system called researchfish³. These data are supplemented with additional information from other sources, such as bibliometric analysis. Combined, these datasets provide a detailed picture of the progress, productivity and quality of the science the organisations support. This includes developing new medicines and technologies, improving clinical policies and practices, and encouraging inward investment to the UK.

The main reason for this tender exercise is to update, or if necessary replace, the bibliometric data that the MRC and STFC hold on publications arising from the research they have funded since 2006.

¹ <https://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/what-we-do/spending-accountability/facts/>

² As of June 2015 (<http://www.stfc.ac.uk/about-us/key-facts-and-figures/>)

³ www.researchfish.com

Objectives

Each year the MRC and STFC ask researchers that have been funded to provide details of any publications that have arisen as a result of their funding. Researchers provide this feedback via the researchfish® system for capturing research outputs⁴.

Researchfish returns were last submitted in February/March 2017, the resulting data has been checked for completeness, and a unique set of publication records assembled. The MRC/STFC require a supplier who can:

- Match the new records of publications to an established international database of bibliographic data.
- Ensure all records have the fullest set of metadata available (e.g. whether papers are peer reviewed or other types of articles, full author details, author locations, open access status, funder information, identifiers such as DOI, categorisation for scientific field)
- Provide citation data for all records (number of citations, expected citations, normalised citation impact weighted for scientific field)

Provide citation data for a number of comparator organisations/countries at aggregate level.

Background to the Requirement

To date the MRC and STFC have acquired these data separately, but as their needs are similar it is felt that advantages, and economies of scale, might be gained, by combining their requirements into a single acquisition.

There are, however, differences in recent suppliers of these data to the two organisations. The STFC has always had its publications matched to the Web of Science (WoS) dataset. For the MRC, data was also matched to WoS up to 2015, but 2016 saw a move to the use of Elsevier data. Other bibliometric analyses have been provided by various suppliers since 2008, and there is no specific preference on maintaining existing arrangements. However, the historic use of different bibliographic databases may introduce work for the supplier in matching existing records to this database as a range of different identifiers will be in use (PubMed IDs are the main identifier of the MRC range and DOIs for the STFC, but WoS IDs (UTs) and Elsevier IDs (EIDs) will also be heavily used).

Suppliers will need to demonstrate a good understanding of the bibliographic dataset, the fields provided, the matching process, as well as the bibliometric data required. It is essential that the supplier is transparent about their methods for calculating citation impact and normalising this.

The MRC/STFC have skilled teams of information analysts and research evaluation staff that have a detailed knowledge of publication data and have experience in handling Excel, Access and SQL databases to support this work. The supplier will liaise with the MRC Lead Analyst, Kevin Dolby, MRC Senior Analyst, David Morgan, and Ian Fuller for the STFC.

⁴ <http://www.researchfish.com/>

Scope

What is included (details in the “mandatory” sections of the requirements below):

- Matching records within the MRC/STFC databases of publications to a database of bibliographic information – e.g. WoS
- A short report on the success of the matching process and recommendations for improving data quality/completeness
- Returning two separate datasets of full bibliographic details for all these publications – one for MRC data and one for STFC (as set out under “bibliographic and publication metadata” in the requirements below)
- Returning bibliometrics including citation data and normalised citation impact scores for these publications, to the end of 2016 (as set out under “citation data” in the requirements below).
- Returning a set of comparator citation data, as set out under “comparator data” in the requirements below, including a description of the approaches used to select papers by field, country and organisation.
- Documentation of the data tables provided.
- Providing documentation explaining the methods and data used to match records and calculate bibliometrics
- Updating the MRC/STFC team via regular teleconference meetings
- Receive/provide data via an FTP process or similar secure data transfer.

Additional items that would add value to the offering from the supplier (details in the “desirable” sections of requirements below):

- Bibliographic data other than the fields set out under “bibliographic and publication metadata” below (e.g. fields of research assigned to papers, categories to group author addresses, open access status of the paper)
- Information (e.g. subject categories) for the citing papers and/or for cited papers.
- Additional data and/or visualisations on publication and citation mapping/networks.
- Additional comparator fields, countries, or organisations.
- Expert advice/suggestions on new metrics and/or methodologies for exploring the datasets.

To ensure that this work is being evaluated on a like for like basis, the price element (AW5.2) will be evaluated on the mandatory requirements of this tender. These should be included in Section 1A of the price schedule. Bidders are expected to list costs for all desirable requirements in Section 1B of the price schedule. A decision will be made by MRC/STFC during an initial teleconference as to the inclusion of any of the desirable requirements,

Bidders should ensure they include the information requested as part of this tender within the relevant quality questions that make up the evaluation criteria, this should include all mandatory and desirable requirements

Requirement

Matching records

Mandatory

MRC data

In 2017 the MRC publication data can be sorted into 5 “Tiers”, based on the presence or absence of a valid identifier. There are nearly 101,000 records in total (Tier 1), which split into 93,000 with PMIDs and 8,000 without (Tier 2). The change in supplier last year means that, building on previously

supplied records, there would be 15,000 unique new publication records to be matched to Elsevier databases (950 with no identifier of any type), and 30,000 unique new publications to be matched to Web of Science databases (1,800 with no identifier). This is detailed in the tables below.

The MRC publication dataset will be provided as an Access database, or an Excel spread-sheet.

Clarivate

Tier 1		Tier 2		Tier 3		Tier 4		Tier 5			
Unique Publications											
100938	Total	7680	No PMID	3908	Previous	989	Has UT				
						20	Not abstracted/book				
						2899	Not found	1220	Has DOI		
								1679	No DOI		
				3713	New			2013	Has DOI	2	Has UT
										2011	No UT
								1759	No DOI	0	Has UT
		93258	Has PMID							1759	No UT
				66384	Previous						
				26874	New						

Elsevier

Tier 1		Tier 2		Tier 3		Tier 4		Tier 5			
Unique Publications											
100938	Total	7680	No PMID	5593	Previous	1576	Has EID				
						113	Not abstracted/book				
						3904	Not found	1318	Has DOI		
								2586	No DOI		
				2087	New			1135	Has DOI	0	Has EID
										1135	No EID
								952	No DOI	0	Has EID
		93258	Has PMID							952	No EID
				79840	Previous						
				13418	New						

STFC data

For the STFC, there are nearly 200,000 publication records in total, with 178,000 having an identifier (see table below). For this 2017 update of data, there are 43,000 unique publications (34,000 with an identifier).

Total number of publications	198,717
With a DOI	168,695
UT without a DOI	9,303
ISBN	76
Total with identifier	178,074

2017 unique dataset	42,635
Number with a DOI	32,024
Number with a UT (Without a DOI)	2,332
Number with an ISBN	41
Total with an identifier	34,397

The STFC publication dataset will be provided as an Access database, or an Excel spread-sheet.

For both MRC and STFC datasets the supplier should provide a report summarising the extent of success of their matching process, in particular how many of the records that currently have no identifier could be matched, and any recommendations for improving data quality in future.

Bibliographic and publication metadata

Mandatory

For all matched records the MRC/STFC require full bibliographic information, including:

- “Document type” and definitions (used to distinguish journal articles and reviews from books, conference proceedings, editorials etc.);
- Whether the publication is peer reviewed;
- Author names and addresses of all authors (and any sector coding for these locations⁵), this data to be supplied as separate tables, with the linkage being a unique identifier at the article level;
- Details of funding acknowledgements (funder and grant reference number), this data to be supplied as separate tables, with the linkage being a unique identifier at the article level.

Desirable

In addition the MRC/STFC are interested in any data, other than the bibliographic record, that can also be provided by the supplier. This may include:

- One or more categories or fields of research or subject categories for the paper based on journal, or preferably at the level of the individual article;

⁵ For example whether addresses are considered public or private sector

- Categories applied to the author locations (e.g. private/public/charity sector addresses);
- Information about the open access status of the paper.

Citation data

Mandatory

Citation data will need to be updated for all existing records, for citations to the end of 2016.

For each publication, the MRC/STFC require:

- Cumulative citation count to end of 2016;
- Annual citation counts (the number of times a publication has been cited in any one year);
- Normalised/field-weighted citation impact, based on the journal or field of research assigned to the publication and year of publication.

The supplier should provide documentation setting out clearly the tables of data they have provided, including any desirable/additional data agreed to be included. This documentation to allow the MRC/STFC to easily identify the tables, what fields the columns refer to, and the total number of records.

Desirable

In addition the MRC/STFC are interested in data on the *citing* articles, for example the field of research categories for publications citing the funded papers, for the purposes of examining the diffusion of these ideas into literature aimed at other disciplines. Data on the citing articles should be provided as a separate table, again with linkage to MRC/STFC publications at the article level.

Data on the *cited* articles referenced in MRC/STFC papers may also be of interest. This information may be used to comment on the breadth of research that the authors drew upon. Again this data would need to be provided as a separate table including linkage to MRC/STFC publications at the article level and subject categorisations for the cited papers.

We would also welcome any suggestions of new, innovative citation-based metrics and techniques to make the most of our data.

Comparator/Collaboration data

Mandatory

The MRC/STFC require aggregated citation data for a number of organisation and country level comparators.

For organisation comparators the MRC is interested in the following 8 institutes:

BBSRC Babraham Institute (Babraham)

Max Planck Institute for Biochemistry (MPIB)

EMBL Heidelberg Laboratory (EMBL)

The Salk Institute (Salk)

Rockefeller University (Rockefeller)

The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI)

**US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
(NIAID)**

US National Cancer Institute (NCI)

For each comparator the following data is required for the period 2009-2015 with citations to the end of 2016:

- Total number of papers;
- Total citations;
- Average normalised citation impact;
- % uncited;
- % highly cited (normalised citation impact of more than 4 times world average);
- % very highly cited (normalised citation impact of more than 8 times world average).

For country level comparators, the STFC is interested in comparative data for the rest of UK physical sciences. The MRC is interested in data from the UK, the US, Germany and France, although it has interest in proposals offering data from a wider range of countries. The data for each country needs to be disaggregated into:

- health and medically relevant research
- clinical research
- biological sciences

The supplier should explain how they are to select publications in the above fields.

Desirable

Data and map/analysis of international collaborations.

Suppliers can suggest providing additional comparator/collaboration data (countries, organisations, and/or fields of research).

Timetable

MRC and STFC data are ready to provide to the supplier immediately.

An initial teleconference should be scheduled to agree aspects noted as desirable in the requirements and to clarify any of the mandatory requirements.

Bibliometric data (citation and bibliographic data on matched records) are required as soon as possible, with a strong preference for delivery by the end of September 2017, and definitely no later than end of October 2017.

Monthly calls should be scheduled to update on progress toward delivery of the requirements.

MRC comparator data and any additional information agreed to be provided by the supplier can be delivered in October, however it is likely work to identify comparator publication records could be scheduled in parallel with the matching of MRC publications.

A final call to sign off the data provided to be scheduled in October.

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.

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 ($5+5+6 = 16 \div 3 = 5.33$))

Pass / fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
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
Price	AW5.5	E Invoicing
Price	AW5.6	Implementation of E-Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Commercial	SEL3.11	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
-	-	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	20.00%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Understanding	25.00%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Methodology	25.00%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Project Plan and risk Management	10.00%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project team and capability to deliver	20.00%

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:

$$\text{Score} = \{\text{weighting percentage}\} \times \{\text{bidder's score}\} = 20\% \times 60 = 12$$

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

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: $\text{Score}/\text{Total Points} \times 50$ ($80/100 \times 50 = 40$)

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

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