

Invitation to Quote

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

**Subject UK SBS Develop guidance for higher education providers
on the provision of information for undergraduate students**

Sourcing reference number UK SBS BLOJEU-CR16092HEFCE

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

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
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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 our customers improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading provider for our customers 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 customers. This allows our customers 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 its customers, 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 Innovation and Skills (BIS) 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 Customers.

Our Customers who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

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	Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Nicholson House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8SR
3.2	Buyer name	Jenny Stratton
3.3	Buyer contact details	Research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	£30,000.00 excluding 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	08/09/2016 Contracts Finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions should be received through Emptoris messaging system	14/09/2016 14.00
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	15/09/2016
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	19/09/2016 14.00
3.10	Anticipated rejection of unsuccessful Bids date	22/09/2016
3.11	Anticipated Award date	22/09/2016
3.12	Anticipated Contract Start date	26/09/2016
3.13	Anticipated Contract End date	23/12/2016
3.14	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

Specification for work to develop guidance for higher education providers on the provision of information for undergraduate students

The commissioning organisation

1. This work is being commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) on behalf of all the UK higher education funding bodies (HEFCE together with the Northern Irish Department for the Economy (DfE), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).
2. 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. The Council assumed responsibility for funding higher education in England on 1 April 1993. The Council's main function is to administer grant provided by government. The Council funds education, research and associated activities at universities and other HEPs (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>).

Background

3. This specification sets out the requirements for work to develop guidance for providers together with underpinning research and testing to ensure it will provide clear, effective and actionable guidelines for providers and will align with policy objectives relating to student information, including advice provided by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and approaches to the assessment of quality of HE.

Unistats website

4. The UK HE funding bodies currently collate and publish information for prospective students on the Unistats website (<https://unistats.direct.gov.uk/>). The website has been available since 2007, but a new version with a greater range of information was launched in 2012 to coincide with the introduction of the Key Information Set (KIS). The KIS is a standardised dataset which enables students to compare undergraduate course-level quantitative data to support undergraduate decision making for courses across the UK. It incorporates data drawn from existing national datasets, such as the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, together with data collected from providers in a dedicated collection. The provision of this information is currently a condition of grant for publicly-funded institutions and is mandatory for providers with

courses designated for tuition fees loans.

5. In 2015, the funding bodies carried out a review of Unistats and the KIS as part of a wider review of student information¹ and consulted on changes to the site in October 2015: 'Consultation on changes to the National Student Survey, Unistats and information provided by institutions' (HEFCE 2015/24)². One of the main findings of the review was that while prospective students valued the statistical information currently available on the Unistats website, their priority is for detailed information about what a course will be like. In our consultation we noted that this type of detailed information was best provided directly by institutions rather than as summary metrics, for example on learning and teaching methods currently available through the KIS. We also noted that such an approach would align with CMA's published advice to providers about their information arising from consumer law³.

6. In the consultation our main proposals relating to Unistats and the KIS were:

- a. To retain a website which would act as an authoritative source of national data for students and their advisers.
- b. In designing this website, to ensure that it would reflect diverse student information needs and help students to identify the information they might want to consider in making their decision, and assist them with finding this information.
- c. To transfer publication of learning and teaching information to providers, to reflect findings of student demand for detailed, nuanced information and the limitations of our current approach of presenting summary metrics.
- d. Linked to above, to ask providers to publish detailed information about their provision, in line with Competition and Markets Authority guidance on consumer law. The funding bodies would support them in this by providing good practice guidance on how this might look for different types of provision, to facilitate consistency and therefore ease of comparability for students.

7. Consultation responses broadly supported these proposals, although there were some reservations expressed around removing specific centrally-provided, comparable information and information such as accommodation costs. As a result, we are implementing our proposals, but have given further consideration to how we might ensure students can easily access information relating to accommodation costs. There was strong support for the need for guidance, particularly from student respondents who felt it would be important to ensure that information was published in a way that was clear and comparable. The outcomes of the consultation can be read at:
<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2015/201524/>.

¹ The four UK higher education funding bodies are the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland (DfE), which has taken on the functions of the former Department for Employment and Learning, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). 'Report on the review of the Key Information Set and Unistats' (HEFCE 2015/27) is available on the HEFCE website at www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2015/201527/.

² Consultation on changes to the National Student Survey, Unistats and information provided by institutions' (HEFCE 2015/24) is available at www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2015/201527/. Further information is available at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/roiconsult/>.

³ Available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers.

8. Changes to Unistats and the KIS will be implemented in time for the 2017 annual publication.
9. In implementing the review, we are currently taking forward three main streams of work:
- **development of a revised data specification** and approaches to presenting data on a new website
 - **development of a new website**
 - **development of guidance** for institutions on providing information in areas relevant to decision-making about undergraduate study.
10. The specification for the work requested of the contractor, relates solely to the third stream of work in the project -**the development and testing guidance**- that will support providers when publishing information for prospective students on their websites.

Aims and scope of the guidance for providers

11. To provide the necessary support to providers, we aim to develop a set of guidance which we aim to publish by late 2016. This is with a view to providers implementing changes to their websites by September 2017.
12. It is important that for those parts of the UK HE sector which are subject to the new quality assessment system (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), the guidance is not viewed by the sector to be an additional requirement as part of that system. Instead the guidance should be a practical resource to support good practice, which draws on the advice, research and evidence (including that produced for the information review) to help providers interpret and HEPs respond to CMA advice in a way **that meets the needs of students** and others seeking to use the information.
13. The guidance will need to:
- a. Reflect the diversity of the HE sector, including further education colleges which deliver higher education courses specialist institutions and the non-publicly funded HE sector (the independent HE sector).
 - b. Accommodate the range of audiences for HEP information (ie prospective students and others who wish to use the information)
 - c. Help institutions provide information which is transparent, accurate and responsibly presented
 - d. Provide approaches that will ensure that course information is comparable (for example, offers some consistency) but is not overly prescriptive, allowing providers sufficient flexibility to present their approach to learning and teaching in a nuanced way.

e. Be sensitive to institutional practice and be practical and feasible to implement. It is likely that implementing the guidance will require additional work from providers but the approach should seek to minimise administrative burden as far as possible.

Scope

14. The guidance should consider elements covered in the CMA advice, but also other aspects of course content and delivery that [evidence](#) indicates is a priority and of interest to students, and outline approaches to presenting these on providers' websites.

15. The guidance should address the following:

- The types of information that should be made available
- The appropriate level of detail to be provided, reflecting students' interests
- Suggestions for consistent terminology or explanations which are helpful and easy for students to understand
- Suggestions on the presentation format that would best help students make comparisons between courses/institutions
- Consideration of different types of providers and whether different presentations would be appropriate e.g. for specialist providers or for mixed economy providers of HE (i.e. those who deliver both further and higher education).

16. The guidance is intended to be useful to all providers which currently publish information on Unistats and those which are subject to UK consumer legislation, including further education colleges and private providers which deliver higher education.

17. The guidance would not be intended to cover all elements of the CMA advice. It would focus on course-level information which is of interest to students, such as:

- Types of teaching engagement/contact hours
- Teaching intensity
- Experience of staff
- Entry requirements
- Course options
- Course curriculum content
- Timetabling
- Workload
- Assessment methods
- Tuition fees
- Additional costs and special requirements.

18. It would also extend to areas such as:

- Financial support available from the institution
- Accommodation (availability and costs)
- Support to make transitions (including careers and employment information)
- Support for distinctive needs (such as part-time, mature or for disabled students).

Services required

19. We anticipate the first element of the project will involve a short piece of desk-based secondary research to produce a mapping of the information requirements to be included in the guidance. These requirements will primarily be based on the advice published by the CMA and the findings of primary research undertaken through the Review of Unistats and the Key Information Set. Emphasis should be given to students' needs in terms of types of information and how it should be presented. Based on these sources, the contractor will need to produce an outline of the areas to be covered and high-level considerations around these.

20. We would then require the contractor to develop a draft of the good practice guidance based on the requirements identified through the mapping exercise with content as outlined in paragraphs 9. In order to produce this, we would expect the contractor to engage with different types of providers to understand any specific considerations that might apply and then to seek feedback from both providers and current students on whether the guidance and suggested presentations are appropriate and inclusive.

21. The work should be broken down into three phases, as outlined below:

Activity	Indicative timescale
Mapping of information requirements	End September 2016
Consultation and development of good practice framework	October 2016
Testing and finalisation of guidance	End November / first week December 2016

The contract would be for a period of three months, with the aim of publishing the guidance in late 2016.

22. This work will be advised by a project advisory group made up of representatives from the HE sector, the National Union of Students and the CMA. As the project is jointly-funded by the four UK HE funding bodies, all outputs should reflect this and be applicable to the four countries of the UK.

23. **The contractor will be required to attend an inception meeting on 26 September 2016** with the advisory group or advisory group lead to discuss and agree the approach to each area of work. At least one further meeting with the advisory group or advisory group lead will be required. The contractor will be expected to bring both a draft and a proposed final version of the guidance to the advisory group for comment. The advisory group may work by correspondence if it is not possible to arrange meetings at appropriate times.

Skill and expertise required

24. Tenderers will need to demonstrate:

- a. A good understanding of the current higher education environment across the different countries of the UK including the student experience
- b. Understanding of policy and practice on the provision of information on UK HE including the intended audiences within HE for this work, understanding of terminology relating to this area, and related areas such as a quality assessment, learning and teaching
- c. Experience of previous work in this or a similar area, and ideally experience of work balancing both regulatory requirements and end user needs, specifically:
 - d. Experience of undertaking primary research with students and within a higher education context
 - e. Developing practical resources or guidance materials in a format appropriate for specific audiences
 - f. Undertaking secondary research such as reviews of literature including policy literature

25. It will be vital for the project to deliver guidance that reflects both **understanding of nuances of terminology and practice** within a higher education setting as well as in a format appropriate that will be most likely **to influence and secure buy-in from intended audiences**, who may not come from an academic background. We are happy to receive joint bids if this is appropriate in order to bring the range of expertise required to the project.

Deliverables

26. The main output of the work will be a final version of the guidance for institutions which must be available by 30 November, 2016 with feedback having been sought from an appropriate sample of providers and students to ensure its robustness.

27. We will require tenderers to propose in their tender document a methodology which will meet

our requirements to include any interim deliverables.

28. Dates for interim deliverables, including methods of communication, will be agreed at contract inception but these will include the mapping of information requirements and the draft guidance.

29. The contractor will be expected to discuss and agree their approach with the advisory group or advisory group lead and relevant funding body staff and to provide regular updates.

Relevant publications

- UK review of information about higher education: Report on the review of the Key Information Set and Unistats: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2015/201527/>
- Review of information about learning and teaching, and the student experience: Consultation on changes to the National Student Survey, Unistats and information provided by institutions: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2015/201524/>
- Higher education: consumer law advice for providers (Competition and Markets Authority): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers>
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education guidance on the provision of information about higher education: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/ImprovingHigherEducation/Pages/guidance-documents.aspx>

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 ($5+5+6=16\div3=5.33$))

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
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 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	30%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Understanding the Requirement	20%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Project Team and Capability to Deliver	15%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Methodology	20%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and Risk Management	15%

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

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

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](#)