



Invitation to Quote

**Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of The Department for Business,
Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)**

Subject: Fire Risks of Upholstered Products

Sourcing Reference Number: CR21021

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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VAT registration GB618 3673 25
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Version 4.0

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 Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for the Contracting Authorities 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](#).

Privacy Statement

At UK Shared Business Services (UK SBS) we recognise and understand that your privacy is extremely important, and we want you to know exactly what kind of information we collect about you and how we use it.

This privacy notice link below details what you can expect from UK SBS when we collect your personal information.

- We will keep your data safe and private.
- We will not sell your data to anyone.

- We will only share your data with those you give us permission to share with and only for legitimate service delivery reasons.

<https://www.uksbs.co.uk/use/pages/privacy.aspx>

Privacy Notice

This notice sets out how the Contracting Authority will use your personal data, and your rights. It is made under Articles 13 and/or 14 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

YOUR DATA

The Contracting Authority will process the following personal data:

Names and contact details of employees involved in preparing and submitting the bid;
Names and contact details of employees proposed to be involved in delivery of the contract;
Names, contact details, age, qualifications and experience of employees whose CVs are submitted as part of the bid.

Purpose

The Contracting Authority are processing your personal data for the purposes of the tender exercise, or in the event of legal challenge to such tender exercise.

Legal basis of processing

The legal basis for processing your personal data is processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the data controller, such as the exercise of a function of the Crown, a Minister of the Crown, or a government department; the exercise of a function conferred on a person by an enactment; the exercise of a function of either House of Parliament; or the administration of justice.

Recipients

Your personal data will be shared by us with other Government Departments or public authorities where necessary as part of the tender exercise. The Contracting Authority may share your data if required to do so by law, for example by court order or to prevent fraud or other crime.

Retention

All submissions in connection with this tender exercise will be retained for a period of (7) years from the date of contract expiry, unless the contract is entered into as a deed in which case it will be kept for a period of (12) years from the date of contract expiry.

YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to request information about how your personal data are processed, and to request a copy of that personal data.

You have the right to request that any inaccuracies in your personal data are rectified without delay.

You have the right to request that any incomplete personal data are completed, including by means of a supplementary statement.

You have the right to request that your personal data are erased if there is no longer a justification for them to be processed.

You have the right in certain circumstances (for example, where accuracy is contested) to request that the processing of your personal data is restricted.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data where it is processed for direct marketing purposes.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS

Your personal data will not be processed outside the European Union

COMPLAINTS

If you consider that your personal data has been misused or mishandled, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner, who is an independent regulator. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
0303 123 1113
casework@ico.org.uk

Any complaint to the Information Commissioner is without prejudice to your right to seek redress through the courts.

CONTACT DETAILS

The data controller for your personal data is:

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

You can contact the Data Protection Officer at:

BEIS Data Protection Officer, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET. Email: dataprotection@beis.gov.uk.

Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) was created as a result of a merger between the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), as part of the Machinery of Government (MoG) changes in July 2016.

The Department is responsible for:

- developing and delivering a comprehensive industrial strategy and leading the government's relationship with business;
- ensuring that the country has secure energy supplies that are reliable, affordable and clean;
- ensuring the UK remains at the leading edge of science, research and innovation; and
- tackling climate change.

BEIS is a ministerial department, supported by 46 agencies and public bodies.

We have around 2,500 staff working for BEIS. Our partner organisations include 9 executive agencies employing around 14,500 staff.

<http://www.beis.gov.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	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) of 1 Victoria Street Westminster, London SW1H 0ET
3.2.	Buyer name	Kailash Dholliwar
3.3.	Buyer contact details	Research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4.	Estimated value of the Opportunity	<p>Total value of the contract: £80,000 excluding VAT</p> <p>Contract Start: Monday 15th March 2021 Contract End: Wednesday 30th June 2021</p> <p>Contract value for Phase 1: £20,000 excluding VAT Contract value for Phase 2: £60,000 excluding VAT</p> <p>With break clause special terms as follows:</p> <p>Wednesday 31st March 2021</p> <p>On delivery of Phase 1 by: Wednesday 31st March 2021</p>
3.5.	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	<p>All correspondence shall be submitted within the Messaging Centre of the e-sourcing. Guidance Notes to support the use of Delta eSourcing is available here.</p> <p>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.</p>

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6.	Date of Issue of Contract Advert on Contracts Finder	Monday 1 st February 2021
3.7.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Delta eSourcing messaging system	<p>Wednesday 17th February 2021</p> <p>11:00</p>
3.8.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Delta eSourcing Portal	Friday 19 th February 2021

3.9.	Latest date and time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Delta eSourcing	Friday 26 th February 2021 11:00
3.10.	Date Bidders should be available if clarifications are required	Monday 1 st March 2021
3.11.	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Wednesday 10 th March 2021
3.12.	Anticipated Contract Award date	Wednesday 10 th March 2021
3.13.	Anticipated Contract Start date	Monday 15 th March 2021
3.14.	Anticipated Contract End date	Wednesday 30 th June 2021
3.15.	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

1. Background

This project is being recruited as part of the BEIS Office for Product Safety and Standards Strategic Research Programme (SRP), which was launched in March 2018. This programme provides high quality strategic science-based research to strengthen the evidence base for Safety and Standards policy development, delivery and enforcement, giving business the confidence to innovate and protecting consumers from unsafe products. The wide range of evidence based research supported by the SRP helps to address critical questions relating to current product safety, and/or issues that might arise due to future market developments.

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (the FFRs) set fire safety requirements for upholstered domestic furniture sold in the UK. This includes fire resistance standards which aim to ensure safety in relation to accidental ignition from a match or cigarette.

The Regulations were introduced in 1988 to help reduce the risks of injury or loss of life through fires in the home spread by upholstered furniture. Between the 1960's and 1980's there was an increase in domestic fire related deaths in the UK. During this time foam fillings had replaced natural, fire-resistant, materials (such as horse hair) making the furniture more affordable. These foams were extremely flammable.

The FFRs aim to ensure safety in relation to accidental ignition from sources such as a match or cigarette. The FFRs do not stipulate how to comply with the fire resistance requirements but most manufacturers use flame retardant chemicals. There are also requirements for labelling and record keeping. The FFRs are enforced by local authority trading standards officers. The OPSS is developing a new approach to the regulations that will maintain and improve fire safety, bring the legislation into line with the approach taken for product safety for other product sectors that follow the new legislative framework (NLF), drive innovation of the ways products meet fire safety requirements to market and facilitate a reduction in the use of chemical flame retardants as the primary means for making furniture fire resistant.

This research will be providing evidence that will inform policy position on the scope of products that will be included in the new approach to the FFRs. It is examining the fire risks of specific upholstered products.

As funding has not yet been approved beyond March 2021 for this project, the project is split into two distinct phases. Phase 1 will cover weeks 1-2 deliverables up to 31 March 2021 for which funding has been approved. Phase 2 will cover deliverables from 1 April 2021 to the conclusion of the contract. Phase 2 can only commence once funding has been approved. This is expected to be known in February/March 2021.

There will be a break clause in the contract on Wednesday 31st March 2021 for BEIS to review whether phase 2 has budgetary approval.

If the break clause is initiated, we would expect the contract to draw to a close by Wednesday 31st March 2021 and if the break clause is not initiated, by Wednesday 30th June 2021.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Project

The project has the following objective:

Research is required to build the evidence base to help inform policy proposals by determining whether certain articles/products represent a significant fire risk based on the product type.

This will be achieved using the following outputs from the research:

1. A systematic review of products identifying holistic hazards and risks associated with fire safety of furniture (risk of catching fire, fuel load and risk of fire spread, chemical exposure from flame retardants, vulnerability of users)
2. An assessment of risk factors and weighting criteria for product types to be considered for inclusion/exclusion in the policy summarising the systematic review of evidence

Expected outcomes from the research:

This research will inform policy proposals on if the products should be excluded from the new approach to furniture fire safety. It is proposed that there is an exclusion list for products who will not fall within the scope and that for manufacturers of these products there they are not required to meet this regulatory burden. Excluded products must comply with the General Product Safety Regulations (GPSR) and will still need to be safe. A balance must be struck between keeping high standards of fire safety and reducing exposure to chemical flame retardants. It is important that products within scope meet and continue to improve on the UK fire safety levels.

1. Strengthen evidence base on furniture fire safety
2. Collate cross-disciplinary evidence on fire safety and chemical exposure in a systematic review
3. Inform options for policy proposal for what products should, or should not, be in scope based on existing evidence
4. Resolve outstanding issues raised in existing research, which focus on the risks of chemical exposure to flame retardants versus the risk of products catching, and spreading, fires
5. If needed suggest areas for further research

In particular, the following questions should be addressed:

There is wealth of existing knowledge and literature available, however this has not yet been brought together systematically, bringing together fire safety risks and chemical exposure risks. We therefore expect the significant first task to be a systematic literature review set against the proposed research questions, which will be built from existing evidence collected and expanded on.

Exclusion by Product Type [literature review]

- A. What other products, not already in the list below, should be scoped for investigation?

- B. What evidence, in regard to the following parameters, is there to establish if the product is a fire risk?
- i. What evidence is there that the product presents a significant fire risk due to fuel load or material composition?
 - ii. Does the product present a fire risk to the user if it is ignited? (vulnerability of user)
 - iii. What evidence is there that the product is involved in fires?
 - iv. What evidence is there that the product presents elevated exposure to chemical flame-retardants?
- C. What are the technical definitions of a significant fire risk?
- D. What is the risk of fire pits and BBQs of being an ignition source for outdoor furniture when they are outside?

Product list:

- a) Headboards and footboards
- b) Scatter cushions
- c) Seat Pads (example, for kitchen chairs, for wheelchairs)
- d) Pillows
- e) Prams / Push Chairs
- f) Play mat
- g) Playpens (including mattresses for play pens)
- h) Baby Swing
- i) Baby Bouncer
- j) Baby nests
- k) Bouncing Cradles
- l) Baby Rockers
- m) Baby Walking Frames
- n) Cots / Baby travel cots / Carry cots
- o) Carry cribs / cribs / Moses Baskets
- p) Baby highchairs
- q) Chair Harnesses
- r) Car Seat
- s) Cycle Child Trailers and Strollers
- t) Pet Beds
- u) Children's light up cushions
- v) Baby mattresses
- w) Outdoor Furniture

3. Suggested Methodology

A large part of this study is to review and combine findings from the fire safety literature with the chemical exposure literature in a comprehensive and systematic approach. Below is the suggested methodology, however other methodologies that provide the expected outcomes can be proposed and discussed in the kick-off meeting.

A systematic literature review of products identifying holistic hazards and risks associated with fire safety of furniture (risk of catching fire, fuel load and risk of fire spread, chemical exposure from flame retardants, vulnerability of users).

An assessment of risk factors and weighting criteria for product types to be considered for inclusion/exclusion in the policy summarising the systematic review of evidence.

The contractor is expected to undertake the following activities:

Phase 0: Kick-off meeting with the OPSS

- Attend a virtual formal Kick Off meeting. This will include a check that the contractor understands the context and objectives of the work, the project working arrangements, and resolution of any queries regarding the detailed programme of work.
- Write and submit a short inception report to confirm the agreed programme of work and the project timeline.
- Agreement of methodology used in undertaking the research
- An initial task bringing together existing knowledge and identifying gaps will be undertaken at the start of the project. This piece of work will be done upfront to guide the focus of the analysis and work. In addition to this, throughout all the tasks with literature analysis elements, we will ensure that an evidence gap analysis is undertaken.

Phase 1: Undertaking of a desk-based systematic literature review and market analysis

- Market review to identify further products to be included in the scope for investigation
- Literature review of fire statistics to determine whether each product poses a significant fire risk
- Market review of each product to identify size variances, material variances and material compositions
- Literature review and collation of evidence in regard to people's exposure of chemicals flame retardants from each of the products
- Generating a risk matrix based on whether product poses significant fire risk, vulnerability of user, product involvement in fires and exposure to chemical flame retardants

Phase 2: An interim report summarising the findings from the literature review and the market analysis.

Phase 3: A workshop, or written peer-review, with independent scientific experts to discuss the findings from phase 2, and outline whether any evidence is missing or further work is required for the final report.

Phase 4: A final report capturing all the above phases in one document as well as presenting the key findings of the project to OPSS.

OPSS will supply to the successful bidder with the current knowledge and literature collected during the inception of this research.

Project reporting: Bi-weekly phone call, however this can be discussed at the Kick Off meeting.

4. Deliverables

Phase 1 (for which funding has been approved) – BEIS can guarantee funding of up to £20k for this phase

1. Project kick off meeting, short Inception report and agreement of the methodological approach. (Week 1)
2. Indicative list of all products to be scoped for investigation. (week 2)

Phase 2 (for which funding has not yet been approved)

3. Interim report containing findings from the systematic review. This should include the generation of a risk-matrix as a way of assessing risk. (Week 9)
4. Attend a formal meeting with OPSS to discuss the findings from the interim report, where missing evidence or further work required for the final report to be outlined. (Week 10)
5. Final report draft, incorporating feedback from the interim report. (Week 13-14)
6. Quality assured final report incorporating OPSS comments. (Week 15)
7. Presentation to BEIS staff. (Week 16)

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.

The evaluation and if required team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation and if required moderation 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	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	SEL2.12	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Act and the Data Protection Act 2018
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Compliance to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW4.2	Changes to the Contract Terms
Price	AW5.1	Maximum Budget
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool
In the event of a Bidder failing to meet the requirements of a Mandatory pass / fail criteria, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to disqualify the Bidder and not consider evaluation of any of the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.		

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	Approach / Methodology	25.00%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	25.00%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Understanding the Project Environment	15.00%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and Timescales	15.00%

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 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.
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All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that there may be multiple evaluators. If so, their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score as follows:

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.

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

Bidders should note that the evaluation questionnaire is located within the **e-sourcing questionnaire**.

Guidance on how to register and use the e-sourcing portal 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. Responses received after the date indicated in the ITQ shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority, unless the Bidder can justify that the reason for the delay, is solely attributable to the Contracting Authority
- 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 Delta eSourcing messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that we will release the answer to the question to all Bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information, we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution
- 7.6 Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.
- 7.7 Do consider who the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority's needs.
- 7.8 Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.
- 7.9 Do provide clear, concise and ideally generic contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.
- 7.10 Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.11 Do ensure that the Response and any documents accompanying it are in the English Language, the Contracting Authority reserve the right to disqualify any full or part responses that are not in English.
- 7.12 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

What makes a good bid – some simple do not's Ⓜ

DO NOT

- 7.13 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.
- 7.14 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.
- 7.15 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.
- 7.16 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.
- 7.17 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.18 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.
- 7.19 Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.
- 7.20 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.
- 7.21 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.
- 7.22 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.
- 7.23 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.24 Do not unless explicitly requested by the Contracting Authority either in the procurement documents or via a formal clarification from the Contracting Authority send your response by any way other than via e-sourcing tool. Responses received by any other method than requested will not be considered for the opportunity.

Some additional guidance notes

- 7.25 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool must be submitted to Delta eSourcing, Telephone 0845 270 7050
- 7.26 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.
- 7.27 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.28 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.29 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.30 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority / UKSBS.
- 7.31 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.32 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.
- 7.33 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.34 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
- 7.35 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.36 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.
- 7.37 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.
- 7.38 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.39 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.40 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.

- 7.41 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 the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.42 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.

- 7.43 The Government introduced 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

- [Contracts Finder](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)