



Mini Competition

Mini Competition against an existing Framework Agreement (MC) on behalf of Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

Subject UK SBS Cognitive testing of the NSS optional banks and the Intentions after Graduation Survey

Sourcing reference number FWRECR17039HEFCE

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Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

UK Shared Business Services

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

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

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

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

Section 2 – About Our Customer

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

HEFCE funds and regulates universities and colleges in England. We invest on behalf of students and the public to promote excellence and innovation in research, teaching and knowledge exchange. In all our activities we aim to:

- ensure accountability for funding and be a proportionate regulator
- act in the public interest and be open, fair, impartial and objective
- be an effective broker between Government and the sector and in doing so, ensure that we are implementing government policy effectively.

Further information can be found at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>

Section 3 - Working with UK Shared Business Services Ltd.

In this section you will find details of your Procurement contact point and the timescales relating to this opportunity.

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1	Customer Name and address	Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Nicholson House Lime Kiln Close Stoke Gifford BRISTOL BS34 8SR
3.2	Buyer name	Liz Vincent
3.3	Buyer contact details	research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	£140,000 - £160,000 inclusive of 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 Mini Competition to all Bidders	15 th March 2017
3.7	Latest date/time Mini Competition clarification questions should be received through Emptoris messaging system	21 st March 2017 14:00 hrs
3.8	Latest date/time Mini Competition clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	23/03/2017

3.9	Latest date/time Mini Competition Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	28/03/2017 14:00 hrs
3.10	Date/time Bidders should be available if face to face clarifications are required	05/04/2017
3.11	Anticipated rejection of unsuccessful Bids date	06/04/2017
3.12	Anticipated Award Date	06/04/2017
3.13	Anticipated Call Off Contract Start Date	10/04/2017
3.14	Anticipated Call Off Contract End Date	30 th November 2017
3.15	Bid Validity Period	60 Working Days
3.16	Framework and Lot the procurement should be based on	BIS Research & Evaluation Framework CR150025 Lot 5

Section 4 – Specification

1. 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 the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. The Council funds education, research and the associated activities at universities and other higher education institutions. <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>.

2. HEFCE leads on the National Student Survey (NSS¹) on behalf of all UK funding bodies, (HEFCE together with the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland (DELNI), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)). The NSS is an annual survey of final year undergraduate students which is published to, among other aims, support student decision making and quality assurance. The NSS consists of the main survey questions and optional banks of questions which institutions can select from if they wish.

3. The UK-wide Intentions after Graduation Survey (IAGS) has been running since 2013. It is an optional online-only survey attached to the end of the National Student Survey (NSS) which asks final-year undergraduates about their intentions after they graduate.

4. The two surveys (NSS and IAGS) ask different questions and serve different purposes to one another.

5. Following a recent review of the main NSS questions, we would now like to undertake cognitive testing of the IAGS and the 'optional bank' portion of the NSS.

6. This specification document outlines a programme of testing and research which we wish to commission to take place between May and July 2017, with scope to undertake additional work in the autumn of 2017 if necessary. The work for NSS optional banks will be UK wide, but work for IAGS is limited to England. The programme outlined below of testing has two components:

1. A programme of cognitive testing of new and possibly a selection of current optional bank questions from the NSS.
2. A programme of cognitive testing of the IAGS

7. The successful tenderer is expected to have extensive experience of large scale surveying evaluation, ideally in an education environment. Experience of delivering effective cognitive testing of survey instruments is also essential, and experience working with higher education (HE) students is preferred. An understanding of the NSS and IAGS and their role in higher education, and knowledge of higher education from the perspective of HE institutions and students is desirable. Tenderers should also be able to address the requirement for a selection of cognitive interviews to be undertaken in Welsh for the NSS optional bank portion of this work.

¹ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/nss/>

Background

8. The IAGS, and the NSS are conducted across all publicly funded higher education institutions in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland; participating alternative providers of higher education; all directly funded Further Education Colleges (FECs) in England and participating FECs in Wales. Students studying UK HE overseas at partner campuses are not able to participate in the survey.

The National Student Survey

9. The NSS was established in 2004, as part of a new framework for assuring the quality and standards of higher education (HE). The original role of the survey was to collect and publish feedback from students on their experience to inform prospective students' decisions as well as to contribute to quality assurance.

10. The survey is in two parts: a 'main survey' and sets of 'optional question banks'. It is currently run by an external contractor, Ipsos MORI, on behalf of the UK higher education funding bodies. Separate external contractors are responsible for the websites through which results are published for institutions (dissemination site) and to prospective students².

11. The **main survey** currently consists of 27 questions about the teaching and learning experience. All eligible students at participating institutions are invited to complete the main survey and results are published nationally.

12. The **optional question banks** allow institutions to ask students questions in additional areas. Institutions are currently able to select up to six of thirteen optional banks. Unlike the main survey, these data are not currently published but are made available for the institution's own use. Institutions also have the option to ask two of their own questions, either two scale questions or one scale question and one free text. **This piece of work relates to the optional bank portion of the NSS.**

13. Students are encouraged to take part in the NSS by their institutions and by some student unions, as well as through reminders and follow up calls through the contractors responsible for administering the survey. The majority of participants complete the survey online (mobile and desktop) but are also able to do so by telephone, or in special circumstances, via post.

14. **Results** of the NSS are currently published in the late summer on the HEFCE website and in the early autumn on the Unistats web-site. Detailed NSS results, with protection for student anonymity, are also made available to institutions and students' unions through the dedicated dissemination site³. The NSS dissemination site presents responses from the optional banks of questions and optional 'open' additional questions for institutions. Responses to the open item ('positive and negative aspects') in the main survey and any additional optional questions are fed back to applicable institutions via the dissemination site.

Intentions after Graduation Survey

² www.unistats.direct.gov.uk

³ 2014 National Student Survey: Publication of data:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/cl162014/name,87309,en.html>

15. The IAGS, which was launched in 2013, asks respondents about their plans after graduation and factors which encourage or discourage them from studying at PG level. The survey currently consists of 15 questions, although routing within the survey means that respondents would be asked between 4 and 12 questions. Like the main NSS, IAGS is currently run by Ipsos MORI.

16. Analysis of the results of IAGS for English providers is currently published on the HEFCE website, comparing students' intentions with actual outcomes six months after graduation by linking to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education dataset. Providers across the UK do not routinely receive their own data from the IAGS, although it is intended that they will receive this data from 2017.

Aims and scope of the work

17. HEFCE, together with the other UK Funding bodies, wishes to commission preparatory testing to inform the development of the optional banks portion of the NSS, and a new IAGS for launch in 2018: specifically a full cognitive testing programme of new survey questions.

18. The questions will need to be explored and cognitively tested with students in order to advise on their final wording. The contractors will also need to contribute to the design of new questions. In the case of IAGS, the cognitive testing should provide advice and assurance on the routing, interface and overall coherence of the survey.

19. Reflecting its UK-wide coverage, both surveys can also be undertaken in Welsh. For the NSS optional banks portion of the work, we require the proposal to fully take account of Welsh language requirements through undertaking the cognitive testing in Welsh with Welsh speaking students. For these purposes, HEFCW will be able to offer Welsh translation services but the contractor will need to ensure that they have cognitive testing specialists to undertake interviews in Welsh. A fully tested English and Welsh version of the optional banks, will, therefore be required. The IAGS element of this work will not require any Welsh translation or testing.

Services required

NSS optional banks

20. We require a full cognitive testing programme for the new optional banks for the NSS. This is to provide recommendations on suggested wording of questions to ensure the reliability and validity of proposed new and revised questions.

IAGS

21. We require a full cognitive testing programme. This is to provide recommendations on wording of questions, sequencing and format of the survey in preparation for the launch of a new survey in 2018.

This work will propose final wording of the questions to ensure:

- the reliability and validity of proposed new and revised questions
- the coherence of the survey as a whole, including the survey routing
- the usability of the survey interface

22. The programme for both strands of work should comprise of in-depth testing, ideally through one-to-one, face-to-face interviews with students in the third year of programmes eligible to complete the NSS and IAGS, following further guidance from the funding bodies.

23. The sample of student participants should ensure coverage of the UK student body by, but not limited to, the following:

- institution type (including FECs, subscribing institutions, and different types of HEIs)
- range of modes of study (PT/FT/distance/e-learning)
- age groups (18-21/mature)
- ethnicity
- nationality (international and home and EU domicile)
- across main subject groups⁴
- all countries in the UK (only England for IAGS)
- Welsh speakers (for NSS optional banks only).

The following table provides details of the services required for the separate surveys.

	NSS optional banks	IAGS
Nations involved in testing	All UK nations	England
Welsh language required?	Yes	No
Elements of testing required	Wording of questions	Wording of questions Survey routing and overall coherence Interface
Number of interviews required	100	60
Number of providers in sample	10	6

24. We anticipate that approximately 10 interviews should be conducted per provider for each survey. It is up to the contractor to decide whether testing for both surveys is conducted in the same provider.

25. We expect to also have a contingency of an additional 60 interviews in the specification to be used flexibly between the two surveys. **Therefore the proposal should take account of a maximum of 220 interviews in total across the two surveys.**

26. Please provide costings for the maximum value of the contract, based on undertaking the maximum number of interviews (220). This will allow us to effectively evaluate price. On inception, we expect discussion around the final number of interviews required so there could be some fluctuation in the initial bid estimate.

27. If necessary, funding bodies can provide some additional support for securing student participants. The method of securing student samples should be sensitive to timing issues, specifically the need to avoid impact on the current NSS and IAGS survey, and reflect common exam/study leave periods for final year students.

⁴ A suggestion of 13 normal subject groupings, derived from Higher Education Statistics Agency groupings are as follows: Medicine & dentistry, Subjects allied to medicine; Biological sciences; Veterinary sciences, Agriculture & related subjects; Physical sciences; Mathematical sciences; Computer science, Engineering & technology; Architecture, building & planning; Social studies, Law; Business & administrative studies, Mass communications & documentation; Languages; Historical & philosophical studies; Creative arts & design; Education.

28. We anticipate that there will be a need for iterative blocks of testing, to adapt approaches where necessary. The successful tenderer should be prepared to feedback to HEFCE regularly during the process and adapt questions for later interviews where necessary.

29. Techniques may include concurrent and retrospective probing. Questions which may need to be answered through the cognitive testing may include but are not confined to:

- How do students understand and respond to the individual questions?
- What do students mean by their response to the questions?
- How clear are the questions?
- Do students think these are important questions?
- Do students have suggestions for changes?
- How do students respond to similar questions?
- What are students' views about the overall survey in terms of sequence and format (IAGS only)?
- Are there differences in interpretation or responses between student groups (student characteristics)?
- Do intended responses map appropriately to the response categories?
- Is the survey a user-friendly, valid and relevant tool from the student perspective (IAGS only)?
- Are the Welsh and English versions of the questions understood in the same way (NSS optional banks only)?

30. Deliverables of this work will include:

- A report setting out detailed findings for the optional bank portion of the NSS. We expect this to include:
 - a set of descriptive conclusions drawn from the data
 - a formal methodological evaluation of the robustness of the question design.
 - empirically supported recommendations on question-wording
- A separate report setting out detailed findings for the IAGS. We expect this to include the three points listed above and also:
 - an evaluation of the coherence of the survey as a whole
 - an evaluation of the effectiveness of the interface

31. Timetable of required engagement and outputs:

Activity	Date
Invitation to tender issued	15 March 2017
Deadline for receipt of bids	14:00 28 March 2017
Assessment of tenders against criteria	By 3 April 2017
Possible face-to-face clarifications	5 April 2017
Contract awarded	6 April 2017
Project initiation meeting	10 April 2017
Fieldwork	May – June 2017
Presentation of draft report to HEFCE for the IAGS survey	19 June 2017

(and possibly also for the NSS optional banks)	
Delivery of final report and recommendations for the IAGS survey (and possibly also for the NSS optional banks)	14 July 2017
Possible fieldwork and draft and final report for the NSS optional banks.	Autumn 2017 (date to be confirmed)

Skills and expertise required

32. Essential:

- Expertise and experience in cognitive testing of survey questionnaires ideally in an education environment.
- Understanding of undergraduate and postgraduate study in UK HE.

33. Desirable:

- Experience with working with undergraduate students.
- Networks and access to sample groups of final year students, although support with this can be offered by the UK Funding bodies.

Section 5 – Evaluation of Bids

The evaluation model below shall be used for this Mini Competition, which will be determined to two decimal places.

Where a question is 'for information only' it will not be scored.

To maintain a high degree of rigour in the evaluation of your bid, a process of moderation will be undertaken to ensure consistency by all evaluators.

After moderation 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	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information Exemptions
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
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 Mini Competition. UK SBS considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.

Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Price	AW5.2	Price	20%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Understanding the Brief and Methodology	35%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Capability and Knowledge	30%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Timescales	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 will be multiple evaluators and their individual scores after a moderation process 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 50

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 50

Your final score will $(60+60+50+50) \div 4 = 55$

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

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

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

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

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

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

Guidance on completion of the questionnaire is available at
<http://www.uksbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/supplier.aspx>

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 7 – General Information

What makes a good bid – some simple do's 😊

DO:

- 7.1 Do comply with Procurement document instructions. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
- 7.2 Do provide the Bid on time, and in the required format. Remember that the date/time given for a response is the last date that it can be accepted; we are legally bound to disqualify late submissions.
- 7.3 Do ensure you have read all the training materials to utilise e-sourcing tool prior to responding to this Bid. If you send your Bid by email or post it will be rejected.
- 7.4 Do use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint Excel 97-03 or compatible formats, or PDF unless agreed in writing by the Buyer. If you use another file format without our written permission we may reject your Bid.
- 7.5 Do ensure you utilise the Emptoris messaging system to raise any clarifications to our Mini Competition. 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 (CCS – 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 Mini Competition 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 Special 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 Call Off 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 Call Off 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 Mini Competition 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 Mini Competition to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this Mini Competition 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](#)