



# Invitation to Quote

**Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of UK Research and Innovation**  
**Subject: JASMIN Cluster-as-a-Service for Science and Technology**  
**Facilities Council - Rutherford Appleton Laboratory**  
**Sourcing Reference Number: IT18239**



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

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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](#).

## Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

### UK Research and Innovation

Operating across the whole of the UK and with a combined budget of more than £6 billion, UK Research and Innovation represents the largest reform of the research and innovation funding landscape in the last 50 years.

As an independent non-departmental public body UK Research and Innovation brings together the seven Research Councils (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC, STFC) plus Innovate UK and a new organisation, Research England.

UK Research and Innovation ensures the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. This is done by creating the best environment for research and innovation to flourish.

For more information, please visit: [www.ukri.org](http://www.ukri.org)

### Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

STFC is a world-leading multi-disciplinary science organisation. Their research seeks to understand the Universe from the largest astronomical scales to the tiniest constituents of matter, yet creates impact on a very tangible, human scale.

<https://stfc.ukri.org/>

### Background to the Requirement

JASMIN is an innovative and world-leading computing facility providing UK, European climate and earth science communities with a data analysis environment. JASMIN is funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and operated by CEDA, the Centre for Environmental Data Analysis and the Scientific Computing Department at STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Oxfordshire.

Since its inception in 2012, JASMIN has hosted over 250 science projects. Users on JASMIN make extensive use of traditional bare-metal batch computing environment, Lotus. This is linked to the CEDA data archive and group workspaces. The former contains multiple petabytes of climate, atmospheric science and satellite-derived earth observation datasets. Group workspaces are dedicated portions of storage allocated for users' purposes. JASMIN's cloud is based on VIO (VMware Integrated OpenStack), providing OpenStack APIs with underlying virtualisation managed by VMware vCenter. Users are provided with a custom cloud portal to enable them to provision virtual machines. Cloud tenancies are segregated into *external* and *managed* types. Managed tenancies provide users with direct access to the archive and group workspaces but no root access is permitted. External tenancies grant the user full IaaS (Infrastructure-as-a-Service) access but access to the data archive and users' group workspace storage is more restricted.

Container-based virtualisation has been used in JASMIN's cloud for a number of years on a range of development projects deployed on the external cloud. Recently, Kubernetes has been used to run an experimental service with Jupyter Notebooks and a fully-fledged virtual research environment with the NERC DataLab (<https://datalab.datalabs.nerc.ac.uk/>). The

development of a standalone Kubernetes cluster system is needed to support these and future projects.

CEDA manages the service and has specific expertise in the environmental sciences domain which JASMIN services. It has a team of data scientists who manage the CEDA data archive hosted on JASMIN, operations and support staff and a software development group which develops software and services needed to support the infrastructure. The STFC Scientific Computing Department (SCD) team deploy, manage and operate the physical infrastructure and manage software infrastructure including the Lotus batch compute and cloud systems.

The successful supplier will report to the head of the CEDA software development group and solutions will be agreed with the SCD team. They will work closely with members of the software development group, the SCD team and NERC user stakeholders, specifically National Centre for Atmospheric Science (NCAS) Weather and Climate Reading University and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

## 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	<p>UK Research and Innovation</p> <p><u>Head Office Address:</u>            Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC),            Polaris House,            North Star Avenue,            Swindon,            SN2 1FL</p> <p><u>Site Address:</u>            STFC            Centre for Environmental Data Analysis,            Rutherford Appleton Laboratory,            Chilton,            Didcot,            Oxfordshire,            OX11 0QX</p>
3.2	Buyer name	Chris Grant
3.3	Buyer contact details	<p><a href="mailto:DDaTProcurement@uksbs.co.uk">DDaTProcurement@uksbs.co.uk</a>            01793 867005</p>
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	<p>The estimated value of this opportunity is up to a maximum of £100,000.00 (including VAT) including any options to extend, although there is no commitment to spend up to this amount.</p> <p>The estimated value of Lot 1 is up to £40,000.00 including VAT.</p> <p>The estimated value of Lot 2 is up to £60,000.00 including VAT.</p>
3.5	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	<p><b>All correspondence shall be submitted within the Emptoris e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Emptoris is available <a href="#">here</a>.</b></p> <p><b>Please note submission of a Bid to any email address including the Buyer <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.</b></p>

## Section 3 - Timescales

3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	20/11/2018 Contracts Finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Emptoris messaging system	26/11/2018 11:00 am
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	28/11/2018 14:00 pm
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	04/12/2018 11:00 am
3.10	Date/time Bidders should be available if written / telephone clarifications are required	06/12/2018 11:00 am
3.11	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	14/12/2018 14:00 pm
3.12	Anticipated Award date	18/12/2018
3.13	Anticipated Contract Start date	21/12/2018
3.14	Anticipated Contract End date	21/06/2018
3.15	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

## Section 4 – Specification

### Introduction

The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) is one of Europe's largest research organisations. STFC supports, enables and undertakes pioneering projects in a diversity of fields in science, technology and Engineering. It is one of nine organisations that have been brought together to create UK Research and Innovation (UKRI); a new organisation with a vision to ensure the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation.

The Centre for Environmental Data Analysis (CEDA, <http://www.ceda.ac.uk>) is a division within RAL Space a department at STFC's Rutherford Appleton Laboratory. CEDA provides data and computing services to researchers working in the environmental sciences in the UK and the wider international community. It hosts over 6 Petabytes of climate and environmental data hosted on JASMIN (<http://jasmin.ac.uk>) a globally unique, data intensive analysis and computing infrastructure.

JASMIN has pioneered the model of bring-the-compute-to-the-data within its domain providing powerful computing resources next to where the data is hosted. This enables scientists to process and analyse data using in situ on JASMIN and thus avoids the need for them to download and manage the large data volumes associated with climate model simulations and satellite imagery. JASMIN provides access to computing resources via community cloud system and traditional batch computing environment.

CEDA and JASMIN are funded to support the research community by NERC (Natural Environment Research Council) and in particular, two of its research centres, NCAS (National Centre for Atmospheric Science) and NCEO (National Centre for Earth Observation). The data includes satellite-based earth observation imagery, in-situ atmospheric measurements, climate model simulations generated from supercomputers and climate-related reanalysis data products. CEDA works in a range of collaborative projects with organisations including the Met Office, the UK Space Agency, the European Space Agency, and NASA developing software and systems to facilitate access to, and analysis of these data.

### Aims and Objectives

The current Phase 5 development of the JASMIN infrastructure currently underway will see significant expansion to the cloud service. JASMIN provides a community cloud for users, groups and institutions within the NERC community and for external collaborators from industry and the international research community.

Through the Phase 5 work, a requirement has arisen to support the development of a Cluster-as-a-Service (CaaS) concept. The goal of CaaS is to enhance the JASMIN's cloud capabilities over and above the existing baseline IaaS (Infrastructure-as-a-Service) to provide cluster computing resources. This requires the development of pre-configured

software infrastructure and tools to enable users and software developers to provision batch computing systems and create Virtual Research Environments (VREs).

There are two specific required outputs:

- 1) a system to enable cloud users to deploy a Slurm cluster in a cloud tenancy
- 2) a system to enable cloud users to deploy a Kubernetes cluster into a cloud tenancy

In each case, there is a requirement for an evolution of capability towards the creation of these outputs:

- The initial goal is to provide the user with a script to deploy a given cluster. In this scenario, responsibility for maintenance and operation of the cluster once provisioned is the users.
- This will be further developed into a solution in which a managed service is provided. The user can provision a cluster but underlying management and operations are provided by JASMIN's host cloud environment.

The solution should make use of existing technologies. These could include for example, Puppet, Ansible, Terraform and OpenStack Heat.

### **Requirement**

The contractor will be required to provide skilled staff with expertise in

- DevOps, virtualisation and cloud technologies and specifically with OpenStack.
- Container technologies including Docker and Kubernetes.

Staff from the contractor will be required to work on site at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and report to the project sponsor in CEDA. The contractor may also provide project management support with their proposal. Work will be organised using Agile methods with a series of sprints and review meetings to direct the work. CEDA will provide technical oversight and decision making on technical solutions liaising with SCD who manage the cloud infrastructure. Staff from the contractor may also need to work with stakeholders from NCAS University of Reading and CEH who will provide use cases for the systems developed.

The work is divided into two lots. These are listed under the headings Lot 1 and Lot 2 below. Bidders are encouraged to submit proposals for one or both of the lots. A resulting contract shall be awarded to one supplier per lot.

### **Tasks**

#### **Lot 1**

Develop batch compute as a service for JASMIN cloud (worth 40% of overall contract value)

1. Deploy a Slurm cluster in a cloud tenancy from pre-deployed VMs
2. Execute a test workload and evaluate performance
3. Make a user script to dynamically provision VMs and configure them to run as a Slurm cluster
4. Make a system to deploy a Slurm cluster and provide a managed service for users, keeping all software dependencies patched, secure and up to date
5. [Enhance so that a Slurm cluster can be created which auto-scales VMs based on the resources required by the hosted cluster.]
6. Assist the CEDA development team with the integration of new Slurm cluster capabilities as options in JASMIN's cloud portal

## **Lot 2**

Develop container as a service for JASMIN Cloud (worth 60% of overall contract value)

1. Review solutions for providing Kubernetes clusters on OpenStack including CEDA's own scripted deployment system based on Ansible. Determine the best solution
2. Make a user script to provision the Kubernetes cluster
3. Make a system to deploy a Kubernetes cluster and provide a managed service for users, keeping all software dependencies patched, secure and up to date
4. [Enhance so that a Kubernetes cluster can be created which auto-scales VMs based on the resources required by the hosted cluster.]
5. [Develop Helm charts to install the NERC DataLab into an existing Kubernetes cluster developed for item 7 above].
6. [Integrate the NERC DataLab deployment with the management system developed for item 8 above.]
7. Assist the CEDA development team with the integration of new Kubernetes cluster capabilities as options in JASMIN's cloud portal

Note that items in square brackets are stretch goals. Slurm and Kubernetes cluster development tasks can be done as parallel activities.

## **Timetable and Milestones**

- M1 Demonstrated operation of a Slurm cluster operating in a JASMIN cloud tenancy.
- M2 Delivered managed Slurm batch compute as a service system for JASMIN
- M3 Delivered deployable Slurm cluster system with auto-scaling (stretch goal)
- M4 Delivered managed Kubernetes container as a service system for JASMIN
- M5 Delivered deployable Kubernetes cluster system with auto-scaling (stretch goal)
- M6 Integrated managed Slurm batch compute as a service into JASMIN Cloud Portal
- M7 Integrated managed Kubernetes container as a service into JASMIN Cloud Portal

## **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.

**Variant bids / options are not permitted and will not be accepted.**

## **Section 5 – Evaluation model**

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

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

The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation the scores will be finalised by performing a calculation to identify (at question level) the mean average of all evaluators (Example – a question is scored by three evaluators and judged as scoring 5, 5 and 6. These scores will be added together and divided by the number of evaluators to produce the final score of 5.33 ( $5+5+6 = 16 \div 3 = 5.33$ ))

<b>Pass / fail criteria</b>		
<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>Q No.</b>	<b>Question subject</b>
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	SEL3.11	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	SEL3.12	Cyber Essentials
Commercial	SEL3.13	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
Commercial	AW4.1	Contract Terms Part 1
Commercial	AW4.2	Contract Terms Part 2
Price	AW5.5	E Invoicing
Price	AW5.6	Implementation of E-Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

<b>Scoring criteria</b>			
<b>Evaluation Justification Statement</b>			
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.			
<b>LOT 1:</b>			
<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>Q No.</b>	<b>Question subject</b>	<b>Maximum Marks</b>

Price	AW5.2 <b>LOT1</b>	Price Schedule	20%
Quality	Proj1.1	Demonstrate how you will apply your skills and expertise to develop a system to make a Slurm cluster that will deploy onto an OpenStack cloud system and that runs a practical scientific workload sourced from the stakeholders	35%
Quality	Proj1.2	Demonstrate how you will make a managed Slurm cluster service for users which can keep all the software dependencies patched, secure and up to date	35%
Quality	Proj1.3	Describe how you will work with the customer and stakeholders to deliver the outputs on time and to budget	10%

**LOT 2:**

Price	AW5.2 <b>LOT2</b>	Price Schedule	20%
Quality	Proj2.1	Demonstrate how you will apply your skills and expertise to develop a system to make a Kubernetes cluster that will deploy onto an OpenStack cloud system	25%
Quality	Proj2.2	Demonstrate how you will make a managed Kubernetes service for users which can keep all the software dependencies patched, secure and up to date	45%
Quality	Proj2.3	Describe how you will work with the customer and stakeholders to deliver the outputs on time and to budget	10%

## Evaluation of criteria

### Non-Price elements

Each question will be judged on a score from 0 to 100, which shall be subjected to a multiplier to reflect the percentage of the evaluation criteria allocated to that question.

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 20% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 20%.

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 12% by using the following calculation:

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

The same logic will be applied to groups of questions which equate to a single evaluation criterion.

The 0-100 score shall be based on (unless otherwise stated within the question):

0	The Question is not answered, or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.
20	Very poor response and not wholly acceptable. Requires major revision to the response to make it acceptable. Only partially answers the requirement, with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed.
40	Poor response only partially satisfying the selection question requirements with deficiencies apparent. Some useful evidence provided but response falls well short of expectations. Low probability of being a capable supplier.
60	Response is acceptable but remains basic and could have been expanded upon. Response is sufficient but does not inspire.
80	Good response which describes their capabilities in detail which provides high levels of assurance consistent with a quality provider. The response includes a full description of techniques and measurements currently employed.
100	Response is exceptional and clearly demonstrates they are capable of meeting the requirement. No significant weaknesses noted. The response is compelling in its description of techniques and measurements currently employed, providing full assurance consistent with a quality provider.

All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that the final score returned may be different as there may be multiple evaluators and their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score.

### Example

Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 40

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40

Your final score will  $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

**Price elements** will be judged on the following criteria.

The lowest price for a response which meets the pass criteria shall score 100.

All other bids shall be scored on a pro rata basis in relation to the lowest price. The score is then subject to a multiplier to reflect the percentage value of the price criterion.

For example - Bid 1 £100,000 scores 100.

Bid 2 £120,000 differential of £20,000 or 20% remove 20% from price scores 80

Bid 3 £150,000 differential £50,000 remove 50% from price scores 50.

Bid 4 £175,000 differential £75,000 remove 75% from price scores 25.

Bid 5 £200,000 differential £100,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Bid 6 £300,000 differential £200,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Where the scoring criterion is worth 50% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 50.

In the example if a supplier scores 80 from the available 100 points this will equate to 40% by using the following calculation:  $\text{Score/Total Points} \times 50$  ( $80/100 \times 50 = 40$ )

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

## **Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire**

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

**Guidance on completion of the questionnaire is available at**  
<http://www.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 Emptoris messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that we will release the answer to the question to all Bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution
- 7.6 Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.
- 7.7 Do consider who 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 Crown Commercial Service (previously Government Procurement Service), Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 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 Emptoris.
- 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 Emptoris e-sourcing tool.
- 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 Emptoris.
- 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 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 to replace the current Government Protective Marking System (GPMS). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications>

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this ITQ to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this ITQ is accompanied by any instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as a result of any changes stemming from the new GSC, whether in respect of the applicable protective marking scheme, specific protective markings given, the aspects to which any protective marking applies or otherwise. This may relate to the instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as they apply to the procurement as they apply to the procurement process and/or any contracts awarded to you as a result of the procurement process.

#### **USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS**

- [Emptoris Training Guide](#)
- [Emptoris e-sourcing tool](#)
- [Contracts Finder](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)