

Request for Proposal



Request for Proposal (RFP) on behalf of Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

Subject: ESRC and DFID Evidence and Policy Group (EPG)

Sourcing reference number: UK SBS PS16204

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

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
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UKSBS
Shared Business Services

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Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS) brings a commercial attitude to the public sector; helping our customers improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading provider for our customers of shared business services in the UK public sector, continuously reducing cost and improving quality of business services for Government and the public sector.

Our broad range of expert services is shared by our customers. This allows our customers the freedom to focus resources on core activities; innovating and transforming their own organisations.

Core services include Procurement, Finance, Grants Admissions, Human Resources, Payroll, ISS, and Property Asset Management all underpinned by our Service Delivery and Contact Centre teams.

UK SBS is a people rather than task focused business. It's what makes us different to the traditional transactional shared services centre. What is more, being a not-for-profit organisation owned by its customers, UK SBS' goals are aligned with the public sector and delivering best value for the UK taxpayer.

UK Shared Business Services Ltd changed its name from RCUK Shared Services Centre Ltd in March 2013.

Our Customers

Growing from a foundation of supporting the Research Councils, 2012/13 saw Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) transition their procurement to UK SBS and Crown Commercial Services (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) agree a Memorandum of Understanding with UK SBS to deliver two major procurement categories (construction and research) across Government.

UK SBS currently manages £700m expenditure for its Customers.

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

Section 2 – About Our Customer

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

The ESRC is the UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues. The ESRC supports independent, high quality research which has an impact on business, the public sector and the third sector. At any one time we support over 4,000 researchers and postgraduate students in academic institutions and independent research institutes.

The ESRC's role is to:

- promote and support, by any means, high-quality basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training in the social sciences
- advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists who meet the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the UK, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and the quality of life
- provide advice on, disseminate knowledge of and promote public understanding of, the social sciences.

www.esrc.ac.uk

The Department for International Development (DFID)

The Department for International Development (DFID) leads the UK's work to end extreme poverty. DFID are tackling the global challenges of our time including poverty and disease, mass migration, insecurity and conflict. This work is building a safer, healthier, more prosperous world for people in developing countries and in the UK too. DFID has a strong commitment to commissioning world class research which directly improves people's lives, and ensuring that it is readily available to those who can use it around the world. To that end, DFID funds research across a wide range of areas in order to drive development and demonstrate what works in order to lift people out of poverty.

A step change in DFID funding for research came in 2010 with the formation of the Research and Evidence Division, with the aim of funding high quality research with maximum policy impact. DFID also significantly expanded its funding for economic growth research from that point. This has involved partnering with key institutions to develop a significant and unique research portfolio across a range of issues related to growth, including building on existing relations with the World Bank, and developing new relationships with institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, International Growth Centre, Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA), Centre for Economic Policy Research and others.

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development

ESRC-DFID Strategic Partnership

In August 2005, the ESRC and DFID formed a **Strategic Partnership** which has seen the development of four research programmes jointly funded by the two organisations, with a total budget of c£25m.

- **ESRC/DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research**, initiated in 2005. The primary aim is to fund world class scientific research which has the potential for impact on policy and practice for poverty reduction. www.esrc.ac.uk/dfid
- **DFID/ESRC Growth Programme (DEGRP)**, launched in 2011. The aim of the Programme is to generate high quality evidence on economic growth and for that evidence to be incorporated into policy by developing countries. <http://degrp.squarespace.com/>
- **DFID/ESRC China and Africa Research Programme (DECARP)**, launched in 2013. The aim of the Programme is to fund research to investigate the economic development impact of China's engagement in sub-Saharan Africa. www.esrc.ac.uk/decarp. In 2014 DECARP was merged with DEGRP into one programme, for management purposes. Both are now referred to simply as "DEGRP".
- **ESRC/DFID Education and Development: Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems Research Programme**, launched in 2014. The aim is to generate world-class, cutting-edge policy-relevant research addressing key questions on learning outcomes within education systems in developing countries. www.esrc.ac.uk/eddev

The ESRC and DFID also work both together and independently on a number of other multi-lateral programmes that include other Research Councils and other funders. An important development in late 2015 was the provision of the UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding on a wider cross-UK Government basis, with a new Global Challenges Research Fund to be deployed on international development issues by UK Research Councils.

The focus of this procurement exercise is the **DFID/ESRC Growth Programme (DEGRP)**. **However** an important element of the Requirement is to place work delivered by this Programme in the wider relevant research context, including other relevant ongoing research supported by the funders.

Section 3 – Working with UK Shared Business Services Ltd.

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1	Customer Name and address	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ
3.2	Buyer	Tessa Gawthorn
3.3	Buyer contact details	01793 867005
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	The estimated budget for this requirement is up to £1,400,000 over the full potential 42 month contract duration. The contract will be for an initial duration of three years with a value of up to £1,200,000. There will be an option to extend the contract for a period of 6 months with a further budget of up to £200,000.
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 posting of Contract advert to OJEU.	05/07/2017
3.7	Date RFP available to Bidders	07/07/2017
3.8	Bidder conference (if relevant)	Not Applicable
3.9	Latest date / time RFP clarifications should be sent be received through Emptoris	02/08/2017 11.00 GMT
3.10	Latest date / time RFP clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders through Emptoris	04/08/2017 14:00 GMT
3.11	Closing date and time for Bidder to request RFP documents	16/08/2017 14:00 GMT
3.12	Closing date and time for Bidder to submit their response ('the deadline').	17/08/2017 14:00 GMT
3.13	Face to Face Clarification Meetings	24/08/2017 or 30/08/2017
3.14	Notification of proposed Contract award to unsuccessful bidders	06/09/2017
3.15	Anticipated Contract Award Date	19/09/2017
3.16	Commencement of Contract	25/09/2017
3.17	Bid Validity Period	90 Days

Section 4 – Specification and about this procurement

Aims

Through this procurement, ESRC and DFID are seeking to recommission an Evidence and Policy Group (EPG) to drive forward their ambition to maximise the impact of the research they jointly fund on policy and practice relevant to developing countries.

The EPG will design and be responsible for the delivery of a strategic programme of work to support and enhance the uptake and impact on policy and practice of research funded through the DFID/ESRC Growth Programme (DEGRP).

Background to the Requirement

DFID/ESRC Growth Programme (DEGRP) and DFID/ESRC China and Africa Research Programme (DECARP)

The *DFID/ESRC Growth Programme (DEGRP)* was launched in 2011 with the first of three research calls commissioned by the ESRC under this Programme, initially under three thematic areas:

- Agriculture and growth;
- Financial sector development and growth;
- Innovation and productivity.

Another call, focused on the development impact of China's engagement in sub-Saharan Africa and the lessons China's own economic development can offer (the *DFID/ESRC China and Africa Research Programme, DECARP*), was approved separately by DFID and ESRC in 2012. Although originally conceived as a separate programme, in late 2014 DFID and ESRC agreed to a "soft" merger of DEGRP and DECARP, with the latter effectively becoming a fourth theme under DEGRP. **In what follows, the combined programme is therefore simply referred to as 'DEGRP' or alternatively 'the Programme'.**

The first DEGRP call for grants was managed through a single stage process, involving the submission of fully detailed proposals against a detailed research specification. The second DEGRP call for grants, launched in 2013, adopted a two stage process, involving an initial concept note stage, aimed at widening the supplier market and reducing transaction costs to bidders. ESRC's procurement of a third call for grants on the Finance theme was based on a single large centre research consortium approach.

DEGRP and DECARP have a combined budget of £25m, funding a total of 43 research grants. Their current status is as follows (some of the budget is yet to be allocated, hence the figures do not total the full combined budget):

- DEGRP Call 1 (2011) - 18 grants, £6.9m (17 now completed)
- DEGRP Call 2 (2013) - 19 grants, £8.5m (1 now completed)
- China-Africa call (2013) - 5 grants, £3.7m

- DEGRP Call 3 (2015, focused on financial sector development) - one large grant, £1.8m, 3 year term

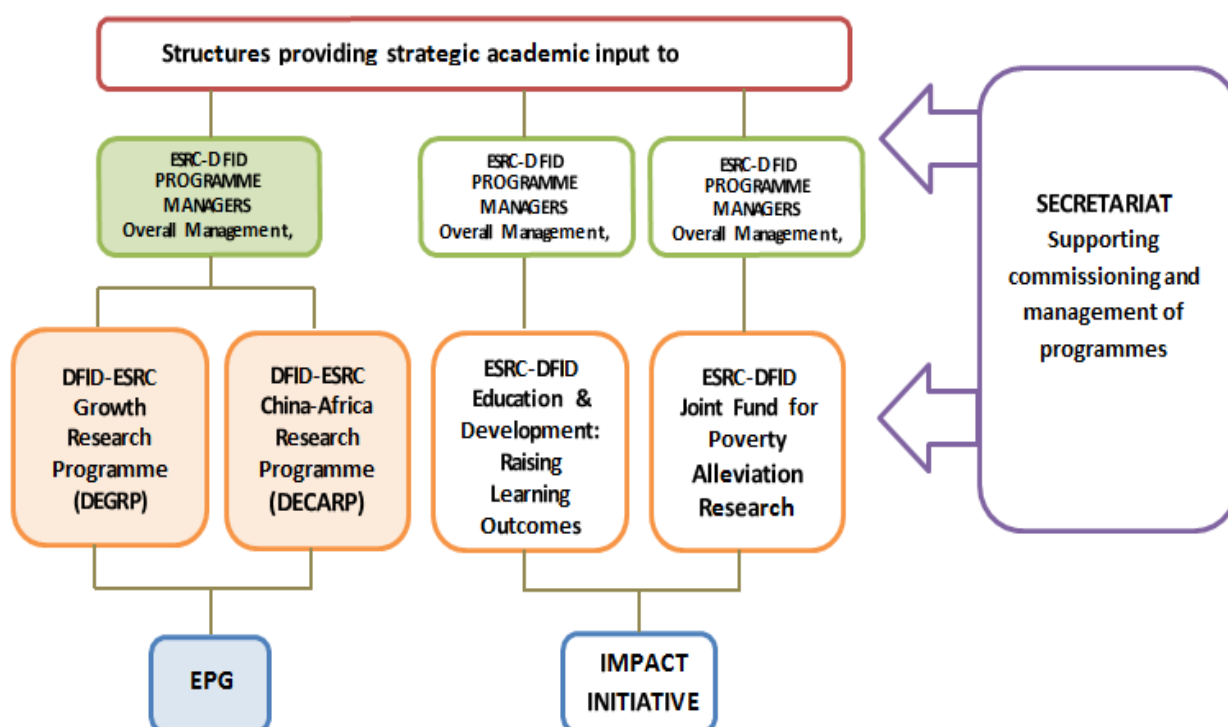
Partnership Governance and Structure

The governance structure for the Partnership is shown below. Strategic oversight is provided by a management group that includes the ESRC Head of International Development research and the heads of all teams from within DFID's Research Evidence Division (RED) that are participating in the Partnership. Programme management is provided by ESRC and DFID staff and supported by a secretariat based in the ESRC.

A range of different approaches have been utilised over time and across different programmes to secure two 'meta' functions to provide external expertise and input to the Partnership's research programmes: the interface between research and policy/practice ('impact') and state of the art scientific expertise in relevant academic research areas. In the case of research uptake and impact, an Evidence and Policy Group (EPG), based at the Overseas Development Institute, has been in place since 2012 for DEGRP. The Impact Initiative, based at the Institute of Development Studies, was commissioned in 2015 to provide a similar function for the Education and Poverty Alleviation Programmes. Note that in both cases strategic academic input does not form part of the required role; however, the EPG and Impact Initiative are expected to work in coordination with structures and individuals providing strategic academic expertise to the programmes in order to successfully deliver their objectives.

The contract of the current EPG ends in September 2017. The funders now wish to tender the EPG through open competition for the period September 2017 to August 2020 (with the option for further extension for a period of six months subject to interest by ESRC/DFID and in alignment with an annual reporting process and performance assessment against the achievement of agreed deliverables and detailed milestones).

Governance of the Strategic Partnership



Key shared programme principles

Despite divergent focuses and scales, the research programmes within the Strategic Partnership share a number of characteristics that are important for understanding the EPG's role:

- Research must be directly relevant to low-income countries as defined by the OECD DAC list, in some cases supplemented by a select group of other priority countries. Research focused on middle income countries not on this list is permitted, but relevance to one or more low-income countries must be made explicit.
- All research must demonstrate effective demand from and practical relevance to, decision-makers and practitioners. Non-academic stakeholders, including potential users of the research, should be included and involved in the design and delivery of projects.
- There are no geographic restrictions as to who can apply for funding: researchers for developing and developed countries can work together in any configuration of their choosing, and grant holders can be from anywhere in the world. We strongly encourage, though do not require, partnerships and collaborative projects.
- Researchers from across the social sciences can apply for funding, and all applications must be at least 50% social science. We strongly encourage, but do not require, multi/ inter-disciplinary approaches and the use of mixed methodologies.
- Both funders support capacity building through other mechanisms, but at a minimum all proposals to these programmes must identify capacity building activities as part of their research approach and consider the diversity of opportunities and contexts for this.

- Applicants must make a genuine effort to integrate adequate analysis of gender and other structural inequalities in their research design, and to disaggregate data appropriately.
- We do not fund contract research or consultancy work where the results and outputs are to some extent already pre-defined and known.

Partnership policies on impact and research uptake

These research programmes provide a rich source of research evidence and the funders are committed to maximising the potential impact of that on policy and practice in developing countries. All the programmes aim to produce research which is useful to, taken up and applied by policymakers and other relevant stakeholders to address international development goals. Policy perspectives are built into consultation on programme development, as well as the assessment of applications.

The Strategic Partnership draws on ESRC's and DFID's shared understanding of research uptake and impact. This is articulated in RCUK's Pathways to Impact (www.rcuk.ac.uk/kei/impacts/Pages/home.aspx), ESRC's Impact Toolkit (www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/impact-toolkit/index.aspx) and DFID's Research Uptake Guidance (www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200088/Research_uptake_guidance.pdf). Commitment to the delivery of impact with development relevance as a core outcome is enshrined in the RCUK-DFID Concordat signed earlier this year.

At a research project level, all applications to the main research programme calls must include a 'Pathways to Impact' plan to address who will benefit from the research, in what ways, and how they will be provided with the opportunity to do so. Researchers are strongly encouraged to be innovative in their engagement, communications and research activities, and to spend a minimum of 10% of their overall budget on these. Award holders' contracts require them to cooperate with additional outreach activities that the funders may sponsor, which would include the EPG. Award holders are also expected to update information on the ESRC's research outputs portal (Researchfish) and DFID's Research Portal (R4D), and to comply with the funders' commitment to open access publishing.

Scope

Included: Design and strategic direction of a coherent programme of activities designed to maximise the impact on policy and practice of research funded through DEGRP. The EPG will be responsible for the successful delivery of this strategically-directed programme of activities. It will take the lead role in ensuring delivery of Programme-level communications and the production, dissemination and delivery of appropriate knowledge products and activities. It will also build upon relevant activities being undertaken at individual grant level by maintaining oversight, facilitating, supporting and building capacity in relation to these.

Excluded: The EPG will not play any part in decisions of academic substance in relation to the Programme or their intellectual leadership and future direction, or play any part in the awarding of research funding, other than providing strategic advice on ensuring policymaker and user demand is appropriately integrated.

Requirement

The Evidence and Policy Directorate (EPG) will play a central role in driving forward ESRC and DFID's ambition to maximise the impact of the research they jointly fund on policy and practice relevant to developing countries through DEGRP.

The contract will be for an initial duration of three years, with the option for further extension for a period of six months subject to interest by both ESRC/DFID and the contract holder.

The contract will be subject to annual reporting and satisfactory performance assessment against agreed key deliverables and milestones, as set out further below.

The following sections set out in more detail the key deliverables for the EPG, other general expectations, further details of the contract and budget, how the EPG's performance will be monitored and assessed, and the composition and capacities seen as critical to successful delivery of the EPG's objectives.

Key deliverables

The EPG will provide over-arching strategic direction for the design of a coherent programme of activities designed to achieve four key deliverables:

- Ensure findings from the Programme's research is effectively cohered, communicated and disseminated in ways which support their use by policymakers and practitioners, particularly in developing countries;
- Establish and/or enhance a strong international profile for the research generated through the programmes;
- Link research conducted through the Programme with outputs delivered by other relevant research initiatives funded by DFID and/or the ESRC, and more generally with the relevant evidence base, to ensure policymakers can access DEGRP-generated evidence set in the context of other relevant evidence;
- Build a reputation for the Programme as a centre of social science research excellence in international development.

Areas of responsibility

To achieve these deliverables, the EPG will be responsible for designing and either undertaking or directing /commissioning activity across a number of inter-related areas set out below.

For each area we have identified key outcomes and indicative outputs/ activities that will form the basis for setting specific targets for the EPG's performance assessment following appointment.

These are not listed in priority order and do not constitute a definitive statement of the scope of the EPG's work: the EPG is expected to take a proactive approach to developing its own role in ways which support the successful achievement of its key deliverables.

1. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT: Pathways to research uptake and use are identified, developed and exploited so as to maximise the impact of the Programme as a whole.

Delivering this outcome will require the EPG to:

- map and evaluate the Programme's research base against the interests and requirements (actual and potential) of research users and key stakeholders within the policy/user environment relevant to the Programme, including internationally and within developing countries;
- identify potential synergies across the Programme where the work of individual grantholders' can be brought together to best contribute to the needs of stakeholders and research users;
- link work coming out of the Programme with existing relevant research including the work of other relevant research programmes supported by the funders in order to appropriately develop the evidence base;
- identify opportunities and suitable pathways to maximise research impact/ uptake.

The EPG will develop and drive the implementation of appropriate Programme-specific impact/uptake strategies that appropriately identify and respond to the needs and priorities of research users. It will monitor and evaluate the results, drawing on these to inform its strategy. The EPG will develop a workplan designed to directly support delivery of this strategy and ensure achievement of its key deliverables. Both the strategy(ies) and workplan will be regularly reviewed and will incorporate amendments that respond to broader trends in the research/policy environment, as well as specific feedback and reflection on EPG activities.

2. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE: Programme researchers and potential users of their work internationally are encouraged to effectively engage to exchange knowledge, information and ideas.

Delivering this outcome will require the EPG to identify opportunities to forge connections and build synergies between the Programme's grantholders, other researchers conducting relevant work outside the Programme and actual and potential users, building upon established international networks of researchers, experts, policymakers, practitioners, etc., including those based in the global South.

This will require coordination of activities between grantholders, other researchers and users to help shape the development and implementation of research projects and ensure policy and practice perspectives are appropriately integrated and opportunities for research uptake/ impact are maximised. Grantholders will need to be kept informed of externally organised opportunities to promote the impact of their individual and collective research, and be provided with ways to connect to researchers working in associated areas of investigation, including in other ESRC and DFID funded programmes, and with potential users of their research. Research users need to be informed of actual and potential research outcomes emerging from the Programme that are likely to be relevant to their sphere of interest and provided with accessible routes to engaging with researchers and the relevant material. A programme of appropriate and targeted activities to facilitate research uptake and impact will

also need to be developed and delivered. This may include, but is not limited to, grantholder workshops, thematic/regional conferences, stakeholder engagement events etc.

3. RESEARCH COMMUNICATION: Non-academic audiences are able to access and understand the policy and practice relevance of (emerging) research findings at a project, programme and thematic level.

The EPG will take the lead role in designing and ensuring delivery of activities in this area, identifying, developing, producing/commissioning, and distributing a wide range of knowledge products that effectively synthesise, cohere and disseminate Programme research findings for non-academic stakeholders in a manner appropriate to their needs, and set in the context of other relevant research not funded by DEGRP. Activity will include the production of research and policy briefs, as well as other forms of research synthesis targeted at achieving research uptake and impact. Appropriate channels and pathways to disseminate these to targeted audiences will need to be identified and used, both directly through the EPG's dissemination programme and by utilising externally-provided mechanisms. The EPG will also lead on programme-level external communication and will be responsible for delivering an appropriate web and social media presence for the Programme.

4. CAPACITY BUILDING/USER SUPPORT: Grant holders are able to maximise the outreach and impact of their individual research projects and, collectively, the Programme(s) as a whole.

Delivering this outcome involves supporting and building the capacity of grantholders to understand the priorities and concerns of policymakers and practitioners and providing assistance in identifying appropriate methods and tools to communicate research findings to meet these.

The EPG will design and ensure delivery of an appropriate ongoing programme of support and advice to grantholders in relation to impact and research uptake that is based on their particular needs. This will include the development of opportunities for grantholders within and across the various programmes to share learning and best practice around these issues.

5. CONNECTIVITY: The impact of the Programme as a whole is maximised by identifying common themes and synthesising the results to focus on policy and practice.

Grants funded under the Programme are diverse in terms of approach and methodology and subject matter. In order to maximise the impact of the programme as a whole, the EPG needs to identify common themes and potential synergies and complementarities in research activities and outputs, both within the programme and with other relevant research including that funded by the ESRC and/or DFID, and to help synthesise the results so as to

link with the existing evidence base and focus appropriately on the interests of policy and practice.

6. EVIDENCING IMPACT: Research impact/uptake is monitored and evidenced across the programme in a way that maximises and demonstrates quality.

Delivering this outcome will need examples of research uptake and impact to be identified, assessed and effectively shared with audiences within and beyond the Programme. These examples will need to be provided in formats suitable for a variety of audiences, both external and internal, including impact case studies.

The EPG will need to develop its own assessment of grant and Programme impact in order to appropriately tailor its activities at both levels. It will need to be proactive in evaluating 'what works' and spreading best practice throughout the Programme. The EPG will not undertake formal evaluations of individual grants or the Programme as a whole but will be expected to deliver relevant information to independent Programme evaluations and associated activity, and to input into Programme annual reports and reporting against Programme logframe indicators. It will also regularly review and evaluate its own impact and ensure learning from this and best practice are incorporated into its ongoing workplan.

Other Requirements

Engagement with grantholders: In achieving its deliverables, the EPG must directly and proactively engage with current and former grantholders funded by the Programme; the EPG is intended as a resource for individual grant holders, in addition to the Programme as a whole, providing a service and a value-added element to existing and planned project level activities on research uptake and impact. The EPG must therefore act responsively, as well as engage in proactive outreach work, both in relation to grantholders and the broader research/ policy communities. The level and nature of engagement with any individual grant by the EPG will be driven by both individual need and requirements for delivery of a strategic programme of work; variation in engagement is anticipated and inevitable but this should be grounded in a clear rationale based on the EPG's strategic approach.

Engagement with the Partnership: In achieving its deliverables, the EPG must work closely and productively with the Programme managers and any structures providing strategic academic impact to the Programme. It will also be expected to liaise appropriately with the Impact Initiative, which provides a parallel function for the other programmes within the Partnership. The EPG will take the lead on issues around research uptake and impact and will have agreed specific deliverables and milestones in relation to this. However, clear and effective communication and engagement with other governing and support structures will be critical to its success. The funders are committed to engaging with lessons emerging from the EPG's work and factoring those into future programme design and delivery as appropriate.

Engagement with stakeholders in the global South: In order to achieve its deliverables, the EPG will need to engage with stakeholders globally, but particularly in the contexts where

the funded research is seeking to have an impact. Many of its activities are therefore anticipated to be Southern-facing, and are likely to include country and/or region-specific efforts to generate impact, as well as research/policy area thematic activities.

Effective and efficient delivery: The contractor must manage the EPG effectively and efficiently, and deliver high quality and timely quarterly updates and annual reports against the agreed milestones and accurate invoices as required. The invoices must detail the actions and outputs undertaken in the reporting quarter as against the agreed workplan.

Resources and support provided to EPG

In support of its programme of activities, the EPG will be provided with access to all relevant scheme documentation including:

- Funder Reports and Documentation: All appropriate reports and documents produced by the funders, including annual reports to DFID, DFID's Annual Reviews of the programmes and programme logframes;
- Scheme Evaluation Reports: The Programme was evaluated in 2016;
- Project Applications: Documentation from successful applicants to the programme(s), which includes their Pathways to Impact plans;
- Project Progress Reports: Documentation gathered by the secretariat from active grants on an annual basis;
- Project End of Award Reports: Where possible, End of Award Reports and Impact Reports which contain information about the achievements of individual completed awards;
- Any other relevant documentation: Including reports produced by previous providers of uptake/impact support to the Programme, synthesis reports commissioned from independent academics and other scheme documentation.

The EPG will be provided with a named liaison person who will facilitate access by the EPG to other staff within both the ESRC and DFID as appropriate. While the EPG will be expected to develop its own relationship with and direct communications channels to grantholders, the funders will provide relevant contact information and may distribute information on the EPG's behalf if deemed appropriate.

Budget

The EPG budget will cover salary costs, admin support/ other assistance costs and all overheads and operational costs associated with achieving the EPG's deliverables. All salary costs, support costs, expenses and equipment costs must be clearly and adequately justified. In delivering its key functions and activities, the EPG may wish to commission additional external expertise to support aspects of its work. However, costs for this will come from within the EPG's own budget and should be indicated and justified.

The budget for the EPG includes both the cost of providing the EPG function and for delivery of the strategic programme of activities required to achieve the EPG's deliverables.

Contract duration and break points

The contract will be for an initial period of three years, subject to satisfactory progress assessed through the processes set out below, and with an option for a further 6 month extension.

As per the contract terms, this contract will be subject to two break points, at nine months and at twenty-four months from the commencement date. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to terminate the contract at either of these break points. At each of these break points the EPG will be required to produce a report that meets the Contracting Authority's requirements and which will inform a review and performance assessment against the achievement of agreed deliverables and detailed milestones to determine continuation of the contract.

Reporting requirements and performance assessment

The EPG must maintain a close and productive working relationship with the other structures and support functions within the Partnership. To facilitate this, a number of regular communication mechanisms and reporting requirements will be put in place:

- Meet with the partnership Programme managers (in person or by teleconference, as agreed) quarterly to provide verbal updates on progress, discuss current and planned activities, and raise any emerging issues;
- Produce written quarterly updates for the Programme managers summarising activities, progress against milestones, and issues arising in delivery of the agreed workplan;
- Produce an annual report demonstrating activity against milestones and deliverables to date, and providing a detailed plan, timetable and budget for milestones and deliverables for the forthcoming year;
- Attend an associated meeting with the Programme managers to formally review performance.

Within three months of the contract start, the successful bidder is required to develop and agree with the funders a detailed workplan, including a detailed plan of milestones and timetable of deliverables for year 1 and an overview of these for years 2-3, as well as a budget forecasting quarterly spend for year 1 and profiling spend for years 2-3.

Throughout the lifetime of the contract this workplan will be further developed through regular review and reporting. Specific deliverables and activities for each year of the contract will align with the deliverables and requirements outlined in this specification and the proposal submitted by the successful bidder and the EPG and the funders will develop and agree the workplan as part of the annual review process prior to the commencement of the relevant period. Performance against these deliverables will form the basis of EPG reporting and assessment. Continuation of the contract will be subject to the outcome of this assessment.

The DEGRP programme has a logframe setting out its required outcomes, indicators, milestones and targets. The EPG will take appropriate responsibility for the delivery of activities to achieve these, specifically those related to research uptake and impact, and assist in reporting against these.

The EPG will be required to produce a final report, summarising activities, deliverables and lessons learned over the contract period as a whole, during the final quarter of the contract.

EPG composition and capacities

There is no restriction on where the EPG can be based; this opportunity is open to suppliers based anywhere in the world.

The funders recognise the diversity of expertise required for successful achievement of the strategic and delivery requirements for the EPG and the likelihood that achieving these will require the EPG to draw on expertise from multiple sources.

The funders recognise that there are alternative ways of delivering the EPG's deliverables and we invite imaginative tenders that set out clearly how this will be done, consistent with the requirements set out in this specification. The EPG will require expertise in the following core areas to successfully achieve its deliverables:

International Development Context and Stakeholders

- The policy and practice context in which the Strategic Partnership's research is located, including the diversity of stakeholders at global, regional, national and local levels relevant to the research programme serviced by the EPG;
- The disciplines and fields of social science research relevant to international development and their intersections, including those relevant to the research programme serviced by the EPG;
- The networks and pathways within and between social science and international development communities and associated bodies at a national and international level, particularly in the global South and in relation to areas of research and policy relevant to the research programme serviced by the EPG;
- The remit and roles of the ESRC and DFID.

Research Uptake/Impact Processes in International Development

- The processes through which research gets into the policy cycle and how this progresses the international development agenda
- The constraints and needs of researchers in different contexts, including the global South, in achieving research uptake and impact
- The research needs and priorities of policymakers and practitioners within the international development context, including in the global South

Research Uptake/Impact Strategy Development and Delivery

- The design and application of strategies through which research can meet the demands and needs of a diverse range of user groups
- The process of synthesising research findings and packaging them in ways that meet the needs of diverse user audiences

- Approaches to tracking, evaluating and evidencing the impact of research in policy environments

Management and Partnership Working

- The leadership and management skills and experience required to run a function such as the EPG
- The administrative and financial management capacity needed to coordinate activities, manage budgets, and support reporting and other administrative requirements
- Working in Low Income country contexts, and in partnership with diverse stakeholders

Section 5 – Evaluation model

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The evaluation process will be conducted to ensure that Bids are evaluated fairly to ascertain the bidders who can demonstrate the required skills qualities, technical ability and capacity, commercial stability and experience to ensure successful performance of the Contract.
- 5.1.2 The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS, the Customer and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deem required

5.2 Evaluation of Bids

- 5.2.1 Evaluation of Bids shall be based on a Selection questionnaire defined in the e-sourcing tool.

5.3. SELECTION questionnaire

- 5.3.1 The selection questionnaire will be solely marked against Mandatory pass/ fail criteria
No scoring criteria will be used at the Selection phase.
- 5.3.2 The selection questionnaire shall be marked against the following Mandatory or discretionary pass / fail criteria.

Selection Pass/fail criteria

Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Selection Part A	SEL1.13	Contact details and declaration
Selection Part B	SEL2.2	Participation in a criminal organisation
Selection Part B	SEL2.3	Corruption
Selection Part B	SEL2.4	Fraud
Selection Part B	SEL2.5	Terrorist Offences or offences link to terrorist activities
Selection Part B	SEL2.6	Money laundering or Terrorist financing
Selection Part B	SEL2.7	Child Labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings
Selection Part B	SEL 2.8	Payment of tax or social security
Selection Part B	SEL 2.9	Self cleaning
Selection Part B	SEL 2.10	Cyber essentials
Selection Part C	SEL3.2	Breach of environmental obligations
Selection Part C	SEL3.3	Breach of social obligations
Selection Part C	SEL3.4	Breach of labour law obligations
Selection Part C	SEL3.5	Bankruptcy
Selection Part C	SEL3.6	Guilty of grave professional misconduct
Selection Part C	SEL3.7	Distorting competition
Selection Part C	SEL3.8	Conflict of Interest
Selection Part C	SEL3.9	Prior involvement in procurement process
Selection Part C	SEL3.10	Prior performance of contract
Selection Part C	SEL3.11	Serious Misrepresentation
Selection Part C	SEL3.12	Withholding information
Selection Part C	SEL3.13	Unable to provide supporting documentation for ESPD
Selection Part C	SEL3.14	Influenced the decision making process
Selection Part D	SEL4.1	Audited accounts
Selection Part D	SEL4.3	Wider group / guarantee
Selection Part D	SEL4.4	Insurance
Selection Part E	SEL5.1	References
Selection Part E	SEL5.4	Compliance under Modern Slavery Act 2015
Selection Part E	SEL5.5	Health and Safety Policy
Selection Part E	SEL5.6	Enforcement/remedial orders in relation to the Health and Safety Executive
Selection Part E	SEL5.7	Breaching environmental legislation
Selection Part E	SEL5.8	Checking sub-contractors for infringement of environmental legislation
Selection Part E	SEL5.9	Unlawful discrimination
Selection Part E	SEL5.10	Checking sub-contractors for unlawful discrimination
Selection Part E	FOI1.1	Freedom of information
	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 the any of the selection stage scoring methodology, nor the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.
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5.3.3 Each Mandatory pass / fail question includes a clear definition of the requirements of a successful response to the question.

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

5.3.5 Questions marked 'for information only' do not contribute to the scoring model.

5.3.5 During the evaluation stage, the intention is that only Bidders who pass all the Mandatory and Discretionary requirements of the RFP will be considered for award stage evaluation.

5.4. AWARD questionnaire

5.4.1 The award questionnaire shall be marked against the following Mandatory or discretionary pass / fail criteria. Each Mandatory pass / fail question includes a clear definition of the requirements of a successful response to the question.

Award Pass/fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.2	Bid validity period
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of bona fide Bid
Commercial	AW4.1	Compliance to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW4.2	Changes to the Contract Terms
Price	AW5.1	Firm and fixed price
Price	AW5.3	Open book policy
Commercial	AW5.5	E Invoice
Commercial	AW5.6	E Invoice implementation

Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
-	-	Request for Quotation response – received on time within the 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 the any of the selection stage scoring methodology, nor the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.	

5.4.2 The Award questionnaire shall be marked against the following Award scoring criteria.

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

5.4.4 Questions marked 'for information only' do not contribute to the scoring model.

Award 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 RFP. 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%
Quality	AW6.2	Methodology and Approach	30%
Quality	AW6.3	Team Composition, Roles and Skills	25%
Quality	AW6.4	Quality Assurance	15%
Quality	AW6.5	Risk Mitigation	10%

Award 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 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 40

Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 80

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 60

Your final score will $(60+40+80+60) \div 4 = 60$

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.

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 total quality criteria shall be considered the successful supplier and shall be awarded the opportunity

5.5. Evaluation process

5.5.1 The evaluation process will feature some, if not all, the following phases

Stage	Summary of activity
Receipt and Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFP logged upon opening in alignment with UK SBS's procurement procedures. Any RFP Bid received after the closing date will be rejected unless circumstances attributed to the Contracting Authority or the e-sourcing tool beyond the bidder control are responsible for late submission.
Compliance check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check all Mandatory requirements are acceptable to the Contracting Authority. Unacceptable Bids maybe subject to clarification by the Contracting Authority or rejection of the Bid.
Scoring of the Bid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation team will independently score the Bid and provide a commentary of their scoring justification against the Selection criteria.

Clarifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Evaluation team may require written clarification to Bids
Re - scoring of the Bid and Clarifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following Clarification responses, the Evaluation team reserve the right to independently re-score the Bid and Clarifications and provide a commentary of their re-scoring justification against the Selection criteria.
Shortlisting of Bidders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Contracting Authority will shortlist the Bidders based on the Responses received and the Evaluation Model detailed in Section 5 of the RFP.
Validation of unsuccessful Bidders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To confirm contents of the letters to provide details of scoring and relative feedback on the unsuccessful Bidders Bid in comparison with the successful Bidders Bid.

Section 6 – Selection and award questionnaires

Section 6 – Selection questionnaire

6.1 Introduction

The Selection questionnaires are located in the within the e-sourcing tool.

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

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 6 – Award questionnaire

6.2 The Award questionnaires are located within the e-sourcing tool.

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

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 7 – General information

7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1 The Contracting Authority wishes to establish a Contract for the provision of UK SBS PS16204 ESRC and DFID Evidence and Policy Group (EPG). The Contracting Authority is managing this procurement process in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as may be amended from time to time) (the “Regulations”). This is a services Contract being procured under the OJEU Open Procedure
- 7.1.2 The Contracting Authority is procuring the Contract for ESRC for its exclusive use.
- 7.1.3 UK SBS and the Contracting Authority logo, trademarks and other identifying marks are proprietary and may not be incorporated in the Companies response without or the Contracting Authority’s written permission.
- 7.1.4 The Bidder shall indemnify and keep indemnified UK SBS and the Contracting Authority against all actions, claims, demands, proceedings, damages, costs, losses, charges and expenses whatsoever in respect of any breach by the Bidder of this document.
- 7.1.5 If there is any doubt with regard to the ambiguity of any question or content contained in this questionnaire then PLEASE ASK a clarification question, but please ensure that your question is via the formal clarification process in writing to the UK SBS representative nominated. No approach of any kind in connection with this opportunity should be made to any other person within, or associated with UK SBS or the Contracting Authority. All information secured outside of this named contact shall have no legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.
- 7.1.6 It remains the responsibility of the Bidder to keep UK SBS and the Contracting Authority informed of any matter that may affect continued qualification
- 7.1.7 Prior to commencing formal evaluation, Submitted Responses will be checked to ensure they are fully compliant with the Pass / Fail criteria within the Evaluation model. Non-compliant Submitted Responses may be rejected by the Contracting Authority. Submitted Responses which are deemed by the Contracting Authority to be fully compliant will proceed to evaluation. These will be evaluated using the criteria and scores detailed in the matrix set out in [Section 5](#).
- 7.1.8 Following evaluation of the submitted Responses and approval of the outcome the Contracting Authority intends to select a short list of Bidders to proceed to Award stage of this Procurement.
- 7.1.9 Whilst it is the Contracting Authority’s and any relevant Other Public Bodies intention to purchase the majority of its services under this Contract Arrangement from the Supplier(s) appointed this does not confer any exclusivity on the appointed Suppliers. The Contracting Authority and any relevant Other Public Bodies reserve the right to purchase any services and services (including those similar to the services covered by this procurement) from any Supplier outside of this Contract..

- 7.1.10 The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to conclude a Contract as a result of the current procurement process. Bidders should review the contents of Section 7 paragraph 7.8.1 when considering submitting their Response.
- 7.1.11 The services covered by this procurement exercise have NOT been sub-divided into Lots. The justification for this is; a key deliverable of this contract is a final overview report and to continually develop on lessons learnt. This could only be completed by a contractor who has been involved in the entire process.
- 7.1.12 The Contracting Authority shall utilise the Crown Commercial Service (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) Emptoris e-sourcing tool url <https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sso/jsp/login.jsp> to conduct this procurement. There will be no electronic auction following the conclusion of the evaluation of the Request for Proposal (RFP) responses. Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. 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, Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 7.1.13 Please utilise the messaging system within the e-sourcing tool located at <https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sso/jsp/login.jsp> within the timescales detailed in Section 3. if you have any doubt as to what is required or will have difficulty in providing the information requested. Bidders should note that any requests for clarifications may not be considered by the Contracting Authority if they are not articulated by the Bidder within the discussion forum within the e-sourcing tool.
- 7.1.14 Bidders should read this document, RFx attachments, messages and the evaluation questionnaires carefully before completing the Response submission. Failure to comply with any of these instructions for completion and submission of the Submitted Response may result in the rejection of the Response. Bidders are advised therefore to acquaint themselves fully with the extent and nature of the goods/services/goods and services and contractual obligations. These instructions constitute the Conditions of Response. Participation in the RFP process automatically signals that the Bidder accepts these Conditions.
- 7.1.15 All material issued in connection with this RFP shall remain the property of the Contracting Authority and/or as applicable relevant OPB and shall be used only for the purpose of this procurement. All Due Diligence Information shall be either returned to the Contracting Authority or securely destroyed by the Bidder (at the Contracting Authority's option) at the conclusion of the procurement
- 7.1.16 The Bidder shall ensure that each and every sub-contractor, consortium member and adviser abides by the terms of these instructions and the Conditions of Response.
- 7.1.17 The Bidder shall not make contact with any other employee, agent or consultant of UK SBS or the Contracting Authority or any relevant OPB or Customer who are in any way connected with this procurement during the period of this procurement, unless instructed otherwise by the Contracting Authority.
- 7.1.18 The Contracting Authority shall not be committed to any course of action as a result of:
- 7.1.18.1 issuing this RFP or any invitation to participate in this procurement ;

- 7.1.18.2 an invitation to submit any Response in respect of this procurement;
 - 7.1.18.3 communicating with a Bidder or a Bidder's representatives or agents in respect of this procurement; or
 - 7.1.18.4 any other communication between UK SBS, the Contracting Authority and/or any relevant OPB (whether directly or by its agents or representatives) and any other party.
- 7.1.19 Bidders shall accept and acknowledge that by issuing this RFP the Contracting Authority shall not be bound to accept any Response and reserves the right not to conclude a Contract for some or all of the services for which Responses are invited.
- 7.1.20 The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend, add to or withdraw all or any part of this RFP at any time during the procurement.
- 7.1.21 Bidders should not include in the Response any extraneous information which has not been specifically requested in the RFP including, for example, any sales literature, standard terms of trading etc. Any such information not requested but provided by the Bidder shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority.
- 7.1.22 If the Bidder is a consortium, the following information must be provided: full details of the consortium; and the information sought in this RFP in respect of each of the consortium's constituent members as part of a single composite response. Potential Providers should provide details of the actual or proposed percentage shareholding of the constituent members within the consortium as indicated in the relevant section of the selection questionnaire SEL1.9 specifically refers. If a consortium is not proposing to form a corporate entity, full details of alternative proposed arrangements should be provided as indicated in the relevant section of the RFP. However, please note the Contracting Authority reserves the right to require a successful consortium to form a single legal entity in accordance with regulation 19(6) of the Regulations. The Contracting Authority recognises that arrangements in relation to consortia may (within limits) be subject to future change. Potential Providers should therefore respond in the light of the arrangements as currently envisaged. Potential Providers are reminded that any future proposed change in relation to consortia must be notified to the Contracting Authority so that it can make a further assessment by applying the selection criteria to the new information provided and consider rejection of the Response if the Contracting Authority reasonably consider the change to have a material impact of the delivery of the viability of the Response.

7.2. Bidder conference

- 7.2.1 A Bidders' Conference will not be held in conjunction with this procurement.

7.3. Confidentiality

- 7.3.1 Subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 7.3.2, the contents of this RFP are being made available by the Contracting Authority on condition that:
- 7.3.1.1 Bidders shall at all times treat the contents of the RFP and any related documents (together called the 'Information') as confidential, save in so far as they are already in the public domain;
 - 7.3.1.2 Bidders shall not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute or pass any of the Information to any other person at any time or allow any of these things to happen;

- 7.3.1.3 Bidders shall not use any of the Information for any purpose other than for the purposes of submitting (or deciding whether to submit) a Response; and
- 7.3.1.4 Bidders shall not undertake any publicity activity within any section of the media in relation to this procurement
- 7.3.2 Bidders may disclose, distribute or pass any of the Information to the Bidder's advisers, sub-contractors or to another person provided that either:
 - 7.3.2.1 This is done for the sole purpose of enabling a Response to be submitted and the person receiving the Information undertakes in writing to keep the Information confidential on the same terms as if that person were the Bidder; or
 - 7.3.2.2 The disclosure is made for the sole purpose of obtaining legal advice from external lawyers in relation to the procurement or to any Contract arising from it; or
 - 7.3.2.3 The Bidder is legally required to make such a disclosure
- 7.3.3 In paragraphs 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 above the term 'person' includes but is not limited to any person, firm, body or association, corporate or incorporate.
- 7.3.4 UK SBS and the Contracting Authority may disclose detailed information relating to Responses to its employees, agents or advisers and they may make any of the Contract documents available for private inspection by its officers, employees, agents or advisers. UK SBS and the Contracting Authority also reserve the right to disseminate information that is materially relevant to the procurement to all Bidders, even if the information has only been requested by one Bidder, subject to the duty to protect each Bidder's commercial confidentiality in relation to its Response (unless there is a requirement for disclosure as explained in paragraphs 7.4.1 to 7.4.3 below).
- 7.3.5 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. Subject to section 7.4 below, the information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this RFP consent to these terms as part of the competition process.
- 7.3.6 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>

- 7.3.7 The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this RFP to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this RFP 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.

7.4 Freedom of information

- 7.4.1 In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FoIA') and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the 'EIR') (each as amended from time to time), UK SBS and the Contracting Authority may be required to disclose information submitted by the Bidder to the to the Contracting Authority.
- 7.4.2 In respect of any information submitted by a Bidder that it considers to be commercially sensitive the Bidder should complete the Freedom of Information declaration question defined in the Question FOI1.2.
- 7.4.3 Where a Bidder identifies information as commercially sensitive, the Contracting Authority will endeavour to maintain confidentiality. Bidders should note, however, that, even where information is identified as commercially sensitive, the Contracting Authority may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA or the Environmental Information Regulations. In particular, the Contracting Authority is required to form an independent judgment concerning whether the information is exempt from disclosure under the FoIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. Accordingly, the Contracting Authority cannot guarantee that any information marked 'confidential' or "commercially sensitive" will not be disclosed.
- 7.4.4 Where a Bidder receives a request for information under the FoIA or the EIR during the procurement, this should be immediately passed on to the Contracting Authority and the Bidder should not attempt to answer the request without first consulting with the Contracting Authority.
- 7.4.5 Bidders are reminded that the Government's transparency agenda requires that sourcing documents, including RFP templates such as this, are published on a designated, publicly searchable web site, and, that the same applies to other sourcing documents issued by the Contracting Authority, and any contract entered into by the Contracting Authority with its preferred supplier once the procurement is complete. By submitting a response to this RFP Bidders are agreeing that their participation and contents of their Response may be made public.

7.5. Response Validity

- 7.5.1 Your Response should remain open for consideration for a period of 90 days. A Response valid for a shorter period may be rejected.

7.6. Timescales

- 7.6.1 [Section 3](#) of the RFP sets out the proposed procurement timetable. the Contracting Authority reserves the right to extend the dates and will advise potential Bidders of any change to the dates.

7.7. the Contracting Authority's Contact Details

- 7.7.1 Unless stated otherwise in these Instructions or in writing from UK SBS or the Contracting Authority, all communications from Bidders (including their sub-contractors, consortium members, consultants and advisers) during the period of this procurement must be directed through the e-sourcing tool to the designated UK SBS contact.
- 7.7.2 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool may be submitted to Crown Commercial Service, Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 7.7.3 Bidders should be mindful that the designated Contact should not under any circumstances be sent a copy of their Response outside of the e-sourcing tool. Failure to follow this requirement will result in disqualification of the Response.

7.8. Preparation of a Response

- 7.8.1 Bidders must obtain for themselves at their own responsibility and expense all information necessary for the preparation of Responses. Bidders are solely responsible for all costs, expenses and other liabilities arising in connection with the preparation and submission of their Response and all other stages of the selection and evaluation process. Under no circumstances will UK SBS or the Contracting Authority, or any of their advisers, be liable for any such costs, expenses or liabilities borne by Bidders or their sub-contractors, suppliers or advisers in this process.
- 7.8.2 Bidders are required to complete and provide all information required by the Contracting Authority in accordance with the Conditions of Response and the Request for Proposal. Failure to comply with the Conditions and the Request for Proposal may lead the Contracting Authority to reject a Response.
- 7.8.3 The Contracting Authority relies on Bidders' own analysis and review of information provided. Consequently, Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining the information which they consider is necessary in order to make decisions regarding the content of their Responses and to undertake any investigations they consider necessary in order to verify any information provided to them during the procurement.
- 7.8.4 Bidders must form their own opinions, making such investigations and taking such advice (including professional advice) as is appropriate, regarding their Responses, without reliance upon any opinion or other information provided by the Contracting Authority or their advisers and representatives. Bidders should notify the Contracting Authority promptly of any perceived ambiguity, inconsistency or omission in this RFP, any of its associated documents and/or any other information issued to them during the procurement.
- 7.8.5 Bidders must ensure that each response to a question is within any specified word count. Any responses with words in excess of the word count will only be consider

up to the point where they meet the word count, any additional words beyond the volume defined in the word count will not be considered by the evaluation panel.

- 7.8.6 Bidders must ensure that each response to a question is not cross referenced to a response to another question. In the event of a Bidder adding a cross reference it will not be considered in evaluation.

7.9. Submission of Responses

- 7.9.1 The Response must be submitted as instructed in this document through the e-sourcing tool. Failure to follow the instruction within each Section of this document, to omit responses to any of the questions or to present your response in alignment with any guidance notes provided may render the Response non-compliant and it may be rejected.
- 7.9.2 The Contracting Authority may at its own absolute discretion extend the closing date and the time for receipt of Responses specified [Section 3](#).
- 7.9.3 Any extension to the RFP response period will apply to all Bidders.
- 7.9.4 Any financial data provided must be submitted in or converted into pounds sterling. Where official documents include financial data in a foreign currency, a sterling equivalent must be provided. Failure to adhere to this requirement will result in the Response not being considered.
- 7.9.5 and the Contracting Authority do not accept responsibility for the premature opening or mishandling of Responses that are not submitted in accordance with the instructions of this document.
- 7.9.6 The Response and any documents accompanying it must be in the English language
- 7.9.7 Bidders must submit their response through the e-sourcing tool:
- 7.9.8 Responses will be submitted any time up to the date indicated in [Section 3](#). Responses received before this deadline will be retained in a secure environment, unopened until this deadline has passed.
- 7.9.9 Responses received after the date indicated in [Section 3](#) shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority unless the Bidder can justify the reason for the delay.
- 7.9.9.1 The Bidder must demonstrate irrefutable evidence in writing they have made best endeavours to ensure the Response was received on time and that the issue was beyond their control.
- 7.9.9.2 Any request for a late Response to be considered must be sent via a message within the e-sourcing toll in advance of 'the deadline' if a bidder believes their Response will be received late.
- 7.9.9.3 The Contracting Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any late Response without justification to the affected Bidder and make no guarantee it will consider any request for a late Response to be considered.

7.10. Canvassing

- 7.10.1 Any Bidder who directly or indirectly canvasses any employee, or agent of UK SBS, the Contracting Authority or its members or any relevant OPB or any of its employees concerning the establishment of the Contract or who directly or indirectly obtains or

attempts to obtain information from any such officer, member, employee or agent or concerning any other Bidder, Response or proposed Response will be disqualified.

7.11. Disclaimers

7.11.1 Whilst the information in this RFP, Due Diligence Information and supporting documents has been prepared in good faith, it does not purport to be comprehensive nor has it been independently verified.

7.11.2 Neither UK SBS, the Contracting Authority, nor any relevant OPB's nor their advisors, nor their respective directors, officers, members, partners, employees, other staff or agents:

7.11.2.1 makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFP; or

7.11.2.2 accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the RFP or for their fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information nor shall any of them be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

7.11.3 Any persons considering making a decision to enter into contractual relationships with the Contracting Authority and/or, as applicable, relevant OPB following receipt of the RFP should make their own investigations and their own independent assessment of the Contracting Authority and/or, as applicable, relevant OPB and its requirements for the goods/services/goods and services and should seek their own professional financial and legal advice. For the avoidance of doubt the provision of clarification or further information in relation to the RFP or any other associated documents (including the Schedules) is only authorised to be provided following a query made in accordance with Paragraph 7.15 of this RFP.

7.12. Collusive behaviour

7.12.1 Any Bidder who:

7.12.1.1 fixes or adjusts the amount of its Response by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other party; or

7.12.1.2 communicates to any party other than UK SBS, the Contracting Authority or, as applicable, relevant OPB the amount or approximate amount of its proposed Response or information which would enable the amount or approximate amount to be calculated (except where such disclosure is made in confidence in order to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the Response or insurance or any necessary security); or

7.12.1.3 enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party that such other party shall refrain from submitting a Response; or

7.12.1.4 enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party as to the amount of any Response submitted; or

7.12.1.5 offers or agrees to pay or give or does pay or give any sum or sums of money, inducement or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any party for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be

done in relation to any other Response or proposed Response, any act or omission,

shall (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to the Contracting Authority and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a Bidder may attract) be disqualified.

7.13. No inducement or incentive

- 7.13.1 The RFP is issued on the basis that nothing contained in it shall constitute an inducement or incentive nor shall have in any other way persuaded a Bidder to submit a Response or enter into the Contract or any other contractual agreement.

7.14. Acceptance of the Contract

- 7.14.1 The Bidder in submitting the Response undertakes that in the event of the Response being accepted by the Contracting Authority and the Contracting Authority confirming in writing such acceptance to the Bidder, the Bidder will within 5 working days of being called upon to do so by the Contracting Authority execute the Contract in the form set out in the Contract Terms or in such amended form as may subsequently be agreed.
- 7.14.2 The Contracting Authority shall be under no obligation to accept the lowest priced or any Response.

7.15. Queries relating to the Response

- 7.15.1 All requests for clarification about the requirements or the process of this procurement shall be made in through the e-sourcing tool unless where the e-sourcing tool is unavailable due to Emptoris or Crown Commercial Service system maintenance or failure when a clarification by email to the contact defined in [Section 3](#).
- 7.15.2 The Contracting Authority will endeavour to answer all questions as quickly as possible, but cannot guarantee a minimum response time.
- 7.15.3 In the event of a Bidder requiring assistance uploading a clarification to the e-sourcing portal they should use the contact details defined in [Section 3](#).
- 7.15.4 No further requests for clarifications will be accepted after 5 days prior to the date for submission of Responses.
- 7.15.5 In order to ensure equality of treatment of Bidders, the Contracting Authority intends to publish the questions and clarifications raised by Bidders together with the Contracting Authority's responses (but not the source of the questions) to all participants on a regular basis.
- 7.15.6 Bidders should indicate if a query is of a commercially sensitive nature – where disclosure of such query and the answer would or would be likely to prejudice its commercial interests. However, if the Contracting Authority at its sole discretion does not either; consider the query to be of a commercially confidential nature or one which all Bidders would potentially benefit from seeing both the query and the Contracting Authority's response, the Contracting Authority will:
- 7.15.6.1 invite the Bidder submitting the query to either declassify the query and allow the query along with the Contracting Authority's response to be circulated to all Bidders; or

- 7.15.6.2 request the Bidder, if it still considers the query to be of a commercially confidential nature, to withdraw the query prior to the end of the closing date and time for Bidder clarifications.

7.15.7 The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to respond to a request for clarification or to circulate such a request where it considers that the answer to that request would or would be likely to prejudice its commercial interests.

7.16. Amendments to Response Documents

7.16.1 At any time prior to the deadline for the receipt of Responses, the Contracting Authority may modify the RFP by amendment. Any such amendment will be numbered and dated and issued by the Contracting Authority to all prospective Bidders. In order to give prospective Bidders reasonable time in which to take the amendment into account in preparing their Responses, the Contracting Authority may, at its discretion, extend the time and/or date for receipt of Responses.

7.17. Modification and withdrawal

7.17.1 Bidders may modify their Response where allowable within the e-sourcing tool. No Response may be modified after the deadline for submission of Responses.

7.17.2 Bidders may withdraw their Response at any time prior the deadline for submission of Responses or any other time prior to accepting the offer of a Contract. The notice to withdraw the Response must be in writing and sent to the Contracting Authority by recorded delivery or equivalent service and delivered to UK SBS at UK Shared Business Services Ltd, Procurement Policy Manager, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 1ET

7.18. Right to disqualify or reject

7.18.1 The Contracting Authority reserves the right to reject or disqualify a Bidder where

- 7.18.1.1 the Bidder fails to comply fully with the requirements of this Request for Proposal or presents the response in a format contrary to the requirements of this document; and/or
- 7.18.1.2 the Bidder is guilty of serious misrepresentation in relation to its Response; expression of interest; or the Response process; and/or
- 7.18.1.3 there is a change in identity, control, financial standing or other factor impacting on the selection and/or evaluation process affecting the Bidder.

7.19. Right to cancel, clarify or vary the process

7.19.1 The Contracting Authority reserves the right to:

- 7.19.1.1 cancel the evaluation process at any stage; and/or
- 7.19.1.2 require the Bidder to clarify its Response in writing and/or provide additional information. (Failure to respond adequately may result in the Bidder not being selected),

7.20.. Notification of award

7.20.1 The Contracting Authority will notify the successful Bidder of the Contract award in writing and will publish an Award Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union

in accordance with the Regulations within 30 days of the award of the contract.

7.20.2 As required by the Regulations all unsuccessful Bidders will be provided with an email advising the outcome of the submission of their RFP response.

Appendix ‘A’ Glossary of Terms

TERM	MEANING
“UK SBS”	means UK Shared Business Services Ltd herein after referred to as UK SBS.
“Bid”, “Response”, “Submitted Bid”, or “RFP Response”	means the Bidders formal offer in response to this Request for Proposal
“Bidders”	means the organisations being invited to respond to this Request for Proposal
“Central Purchasing Body”	means a duly constituted public sector organisation which procures goods/services for and on behalf of contracting authorities
“Conditions of Bid”	means the terms and conditions set out in this RFP relating to the submission of a Bid
“Contract”	means the agreement to be entered by the Contracting Authority and the Supplier following any award under the procurement
“Contracting Bodies”	means the Contracting Authority and any other contracting authorities described in the OJEU Contract Notice
“Contracting Authority”	A public body regulated under the Public Contracts Regulations on whose behalf the procurement is being run
“Customer”	means the legal entity (or entities) for which any Contract agreed will be made accessible to.
“Due Diligence Information”	means the background and supporting documents and information provided by the Contracting Authority for the purpose of better informing the Bidders responses to this Request for Proposal
"EIR"	mean the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant Government department in relation to such regulations
FoIA	means the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any subordinate legislation made under such Act from time to time together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant Government department in relation to such legislation
“Lot”	means a discrete sub-division of the requirements
“Mandatory”	Means a pass / fail criteria which must be met in order for a Bid to be considered, unless otherwise specified.
“OJEU Contract Notice”	means the advertisement issued in the Official Journal of the European Union
“Order”	means an order for served by any Contracting Body on the Supplier
“Other Public Bodies”	means all Contracting Bodies except the Contracting Authority
“Request for Proposal” or “RFP”	means this Request for Proposal documentation and all related documents published by the Contracting Authority and made

	available to Bidders and includes the Due Diligence Information. NOTE: This document is often referred to as an Invitation to Tender within other organisations
“Supplier”	means the organisation awarded the Contract
“Standard Goods /Services”	means any goods/services set out at within Section 4 Specification