Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

Subject: UKRI Firmware development for the DUNE Data Acquisition System STFC

Sourcing Reference Number: DDaT19214

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

Version 1.0

UKSBS
Shared Business Services

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Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

UK SBS currently manages £700m expenditure for its Contracting Authorities.
Our Contracting Authorities who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed here.

Privacy Statement

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

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

- We will keep your data safe and private.
- We will not sell your data to anyone.
- We will only share your data with those you give us permission to share with and only for legitimate service delivery reasons.

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

For details on how the Contracting Authority protect and process your personal data please follow the link below:

https://www.ukri.org/privacy-notice/

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

Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

STFC is a world-leading multi-disciplinary science organisation, whose goal is to deliver economic, societal, scientific and international benefits to the UK and its people – and more broadly to the world.

STFC support an academic community of around 1,700 in particle physics, nuclear physics, and astronomy including space science, who work at more than 50 universities and research institutes in the UK, Europe, Japan and the United States, including a rolling cohort of more than 900 PhD students.

The organisation's large-scale scientific facilities in the UK and Europe are used by more than 3,500 users each year, carrying out more than 2,000 experiments and generating around 900 publications.

The combination of access to world-class research facilities and scientists, office and laboratory space, business support, and an environment which encourages innovation has proven a compelling combination, attracting start-ups, SMEs and large blue chips such as IBM and Unilever.

Examples of funded research

• STFC is providing the design infrastructure for the £23bn UK microelectronics sector that underpins strategically important industries worth £78bn to the UK economy

• STFC's ISIS facility and its users, working in partnership with the NHS, developed a novel material to improve the treatment of cleft lip and palate, speeding up healing times and reducing operating costs

• STFC's Synchrotron Radiation Source was used to understand how conventional anti-malarial drugs work, allowing the development of more effective treatment to reduce the devastating global impact of malaria

• STFC's ISIS facility is identifying new materials that can safely and conveniently store hydrogen, enabling the development of hydrogen-fuelled cars reducing reliance on fossil fuels and cutting carbon emissions

www.stfc.ukri.org

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	UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1SZ
3.2.	Buyer name	Nikolaos Filippis
3.3.	Buyer contact details	DDaTprocurement@uksbs.co.uk
3.4.	Estimated value of the Opportunity	The estimated value is £65,000.00 excluding VAT.
3.5.	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	**All correspondence shall be submitted within the Messaging Centre of the e-sourcing. Guidance Notes to support the use of Delta eSourcing is available here.** **Please note submission of a Bid to any email address including the Buyer will result in the Bid not being considered.**

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6.	Date of Issue of Contract Advert on Contracts Finder	Wednesday 13th November 2019 Contracts Finder
3.7.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Delta eSourcing messaging system	Wednesday 20th November 2019 11.00
3.8.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Delta eSourcing Portal	Thursday 21st November 2019
3.9.	Latest date and time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Delta eSourcing	Wednesday 27th November 2019 14:00
3.10.	Date/time Bidders should be available if telephone clarifications are required	Monday 2nd December 2019 11.00
3.11.	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Monday 9th December 2019
3.12.	Anticipated Contract Award date	Friday 13th December 2019
3.13.	Anticipated Contract Start date	Monday 16th December 2019
3.14.	Anticipated Contract End date	Friday 12th June 2020
3.15.	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

• Section 4 – Specification

1. Introduction

The DUNE experiment (http://www.dunescience.org/) needs to store all the data from the detector (rather than a triggered sub-set) if a potential Super Nova is detected. It is anticipated that this will be done by writing to Non-Volatile Memory Express (NVMe) attached storage (https://nvmexpress.org/). Approximately 300 devices will be written to in parallel for each 10kTonne detector module, with a total bandwidth of approximately 540 GBytes/s.

This is a specification for the design, development and production of a suitable Very High-Speed Integrated Circuit Hardware Description Language (VHDL) field-programmable gate array (FPGA) firmware and any necessary software for Xilinx 7 series Ultrascale or Ultrascale Plus FPGAs to implement this in an open VHDL source code form suitable for the project to use and develop further as wanted.

2. Aims & Objectives

Closed source IP is available to write from FPGA fabric to NVMe drives over PCIe x4. However, the distributed code development model used within Particle Physics makes the use of tightly licensed closed source IP extremely onerous, slowing development and increasing schedule risk.

This tender is for the supply of IP in source code form that can be distributed freely inside the DUNE collaboration or released as open source.

To facilitate the development for data acquisition firmware for the DUNE experiment far detector by providing FPGA fabric NVMe interface in source code form

Each FPGA will interface to two or more NVMe devices.

3. Background to the Requirement

The DUNE data acquisition (DAQ) system is being developed by an international collaboration of physicists and engineers.

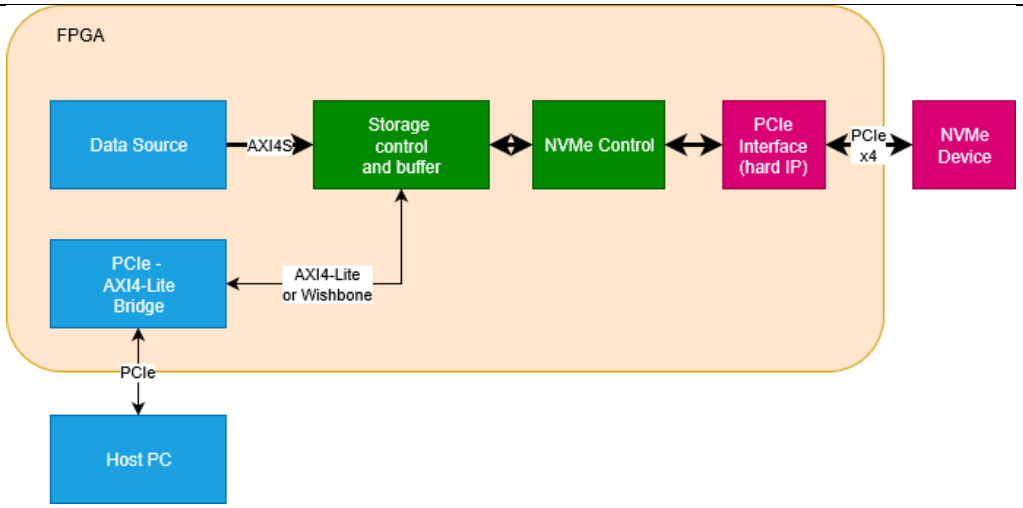
The functions of the DAQ are distributed between “firmware” that configures FPGAs housed on custom PCIe boards and software that runs on the server PCs that house the PCIe boards.

The normal working model is to distribute tasks between institutes and developers and use “Git” code repositories.

It is normal for every member of the team to expect to be able to build a configuration file “bitstream” for the FPGA.

4. Possible Implementation

A possible implementation design for illustrative purpose is shown below. However, alternative designs will be considered for this procurement.



There will be a test harness either implemented in software on a host PC or on the FPGA in VHDL. The choice of this will depend on the host → FPGA evaluation boards interface abilities of the chosen development platform.

To simplify the design the NVMe parameters, such as the erase block size and overall size, may be configured within the FPGA VHDL rather than read from the NVMe devices. This will be considered during the design phase.

One issue with NVMe and NAND FLASH devices in general is the need to erase complete blocks before write. The management of blocks is performed by a controller on the NVMe device. Its algorithms are not publicly available. These algorithms can lead to large latencies during write operations. It will be likely be necessary to erase blocks before use and/or not use all of the logical blocks present on a device (say use 80% of available blocks). NVMe's provide TRIM functionality as well as other techniques to manage this. Part of the work will be to manage this and test the performance, especially write speed and latency, with a few different types of NVMe. The maximum latency will be determined which will provide a value for the data buffering requirements needed. There will be small block buffers in the NVMe IP, but it is expected that the main latency handling data buffer will be provided by the client firmware.

5. Demonstration Equipment

The supplier shall supply the appropriate hardware equipment to demonstrate the required firmware as per specification below or alternative agreed with DUNE:

- Xilinx evaluation board VCU118.
- Xilinx NVMe adapter board, AB17-M2FMC, with two NVMe M2 locations.
- 6 x 500 GByte NVMe devices (each with > 2000 MBytes/s write speed). Each set of two would be from a different vendor.

For the avoidance of any doubt, the hardware equipment supplied under this contract shall remain the ownership of UKRI.

6. Program of Work

- Design a suitable architecture to drive the NVMe devices over 4 x PCIe lanes each. This may use direct FPGA state machines or soft cores to generate the necessary NVMe commands to send and parse responses.
- Implement a streaming data interface, based on the AXI4S standard, to receive data that will be written to the NVMe device. Implement a readout and

control interface based on AIX-4 Lite or Wishbone standards to set up and control operation of the core and read data from the NVMe device.

- Implement a simple FPGA IP test harness and Linux host software test system to send and receive data from the NVMe. This would provide statistics such as overall data rate and latency figures as well as validate the data passed through the NVMe devices.
- Test a minimum of two vendors/types of NVMe devices using the test rig.
- Perform a minimum of two long-term tests to check reliability and longer-term performance.
- Document the IP and produce a firmware/software package.

7. Scope

- Supply of Firmware source code in a suitable format
- Supply of Documentation (description of major blocks, description of the two interfaces, including memory map for AXI-4 Lite/Wishbone)
- Demonstration in hardware (as specified in likely equipment including the ability to generate FPGA configuration file for demonstration from source code)

8. Requirement

8.1 Technical Solution

- Supply of firmware source code to write from Xilinx 7 series Ultrascale+ FPGAs to NVMe devices.
- Supply of firmware software to exercise the functionality of the NVMe firmware.
- Firmware will be targeted for Xilinx 7 series Ultrascale or Ultrascale Plus FPGAs.
- Firmware will be targeted at programmable logic only (i.e. no use of Zynq ARM cores).
- Data shall be written in continuous bursts.
- The maximum burst length can either be a programmable parameter or used at synthesis time.
- The burst length will be between 20GBytes and 200GBytes.
- The firmware should be able to cope with up to two separate bursts of data stored to NVMe.
- The third burst will overwrite the first, the fourth burst the second, etc.
- The maximum write speed should be limited by the NVMe drive, not the firmware.
- It shall be possible to instantiate more than one NVMe interface in an FPGA (the expectation is two NVMe devices per FPGA)
- The FPGA resources used shall be such that it is possible to instantiate at least two NVMe interfaces in a Kintex KU11P device.
- The interface for data writing will be AXI-4 Stream.
- The interface for data reading should be AXI-4 Lite or Wishbone.
- Writing data takes priority over reading data; Firmware should switch to write mode without data loss even when reading is taking place.
- The readout can be “block oriented” with a register written to indicate what block should be read and a status register to indicate that the block has been read to memory buffer.
- It should be possible to read data at an average speed of 100MBit/s or greater.
- The same interface can be used for setup and control and for reading data.

- Functionality (for example, setting up drive, preparing lists of blocks to write, etc.) can be moved between the firmware and software but an “end-to-end" implementation should be demonstrated for setup, monitoring, writing and reading.

8.2 Solution Testing

- A demonstration of the firmware and software must be supplied running on an Evaluation FPGA board as specified in the likely equipment section above or equivalent.
- All features of the solution must be tested including automated highly accelerated lifetime testing. The test scripts/software to test the solution must be provided to DUNE.
- Test write speed to NVMe device (new) shall be minimum 2GB/s and be sustained for 100GB blocks).
- Test reading shall back data and shall verify no data corruption.
- Correct handling of simultaneous read and write requests must be tested. (Writing data shall override data reading.)

8.3 Code Quality

- The supplier must utilise a coding convention. Details of the coding convention used must be shared with DUNE.
- The supplier shall ensure code readability (i.e. the supplier must have procedures in place for ensuring code quality.).
- Test-benches shall be utilised to test functionality of individual code blocks. These test benches must be shared with DUNE

8.4 Knowledge Sharing

- Firmware and software shall be supplied in source code form.
- Firmware and software may be released by the DUNE collaboration as Open Source (license TBD) or retained within the collaboration.
- Regardless of method of release and licensing both DUNE and the supplier will retain permanent irrevocable license to use and develop the firmware and software.
- Firmware and software must be as unencumbered as possible by patent and license restrictions. (For example, if a soft-core microprocessor is used it should be Open Source).
- Documentation about the structure of the firmware and software should be provided to enable maintenance by DUNE.
- There shall be regular meetings between a member of the DUNE team and the supplier to discuss progress and technical details (not less than one per month, unless by mutual agreement)
- There may be a member of the DUNE DAQ firmware development team permanently allocated to liaise with the supplier. In this case meetings will be expected to be more frequent (by mutual agreement).
- The supplier should provide on-going support to the DUNE collaboration with up to 3 staff days of effort spread over up to 3 months from delivery of the firmware.

9 Timetable

The contract shall cover a six (6) month period and the deliverables as outlined in the scope section of this specification must be delivered within that period commencing on the date the contract is awarded.

Terms and Conditions

Bidders are to note that any requested modifications to the Contracting Authority Terms and Conditions on the grounds of statutory and legal matters only, shall be raised as a formal clarification during the permitted clarification period.

Section 5 – Evaluation model

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

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

The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required.

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

Pass / Fail criteria		
Questionnaire	**Q No.**	**Question subject**
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	SEL1.3	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information
Commercial	FOI1.2	Freedom of Information Act Exemptions
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Compliance to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW4.2	Changes to the Contract Terms
Price	AW5.1	Firm and Fixed Price
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
	In the event of a Bidder failing to meet the requirements of a Mandatory pass / fail criteria, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to disqualify the Bidder and not consider evaluation of any of the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.	

Scoring criteria

Evaluation Justification Statement

In consideration of this particular requirement the Contracting Authority has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this ITQ. The Contracting Authority considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.

Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Price	AW5.2	Price	30%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Technical Solution	28%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Solution Testing	17%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Code Quality	15%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Knowledge Share	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:
Score = {weighting percentage} x {bidder's score} = 20% x 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 there may be multiple evaluators. If so, their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score as follows:

Example
Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60
Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60
Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 40
Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40
Your final score will (60+60+40+40) ÷ 4 = 50

Price elements will be judged on the following criteria.

The lowest price for a response which meets the pass criteria shall score 100.
All other bids shall be scored on a pro rata basis in relation to the lowest price. The score is then subject to a multiplier to reflect the percentage value of the price criterion.

For example - Bid 1 £100,000 scores 100.
Bid 2 £120,000 differential of £20,000 or 20% remove 20% from price scores 80
Bid 3 £150,000 differential £50,000 remove 50% from price scores 50.
Bid 4 £175,000 differential £75,000 remove 75% from price scores 25.
Bid 5 £200,000 differential £100,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.
Bid 6 £300,000 differential £200,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.
Where the scoring criterion is worth 50% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 50.

In the example if a supplier scores 80 from the available 100 points this will equate to 40% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points multiplied by 50 (80/100 x 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 Delta eSourcing messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that we will release the answer to the question to all Bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information, we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution

7.6 Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.

7.7 Do consider who the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority's needs.

7.8 Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.

7.9 Do provide clear, concise and ideally generic contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.

7.10 Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.

7.11 Do ensure that the Response and any documents accompanying it are in the English Language, the Contracting Authority reserve the right to disqualify any full or part responses that are not in English.

7.12 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

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

DO NOT

7.13 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.

7.14 Do not attach 'glossy' brochures that have not been requested, they will not be read unless we have asked for them. Only send what has been requested and only send supplementary information if we have offered the opportunity so to do.

7.15 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.

7.16 Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Contracting Authority to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you. All information secured outside of formal Buyer communications shall have no Legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.

7.17 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.

7.18 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.

7.19 Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.

7.20 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.

7.21 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.

7.22 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.

7.23 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.

7.24 Do not unless explicitly requested by the Contracting Authority either in the procurement documents or via a formal clarification from the Contracting Authority send your response by any way other than via e-sourcing tool. Responses received by any other method than requested will not be considered for the opportunity.

Some additional guidance notes

7.25 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool must be submitted to Delta eSourcing, Telephone 0845 270 7050

7.26 Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. Where they are not permissible any attachments submitted will not be considered as part of the evaluation process.

7.27 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.

7.28 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.

7.29 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement

7.30 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority / UKSBS.

7.31 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through the Delta eSourcing Portal.

7.32 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.

7.33 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, or your Bid will be rejected.

7.34 Bidders should note the Government's transparency agenda requires your Bid and any Contract entered into to be published on a designated, publicly searchable web site. By submitting a response to this ITQ Bidders are agreeing that their Bid and Contract may be made public

7.35 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.

7.36 Bidders may only amend the contract terms during the clarification period only, only if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract terms without such grounds and the Contracting Authority fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified, we may reject your Bid.

7.37 We will let you know the outcome of your Bid evaluation and where requested will provide a written debrief of the relative strengths and weaknesses of your Bid.

7.38 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.

7.39 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Delta eSourcing Portal.

7.40 Bidders should note that if they are successful with their proposal the Contracting Authority reserves the right to ask additional compliancy checks prior to the award of

any Contract. In the event of a Bidder failing to meet one of the compliancy checks the Contracting Authority may decline to proceed with the award of the Contract to the successful Bidder.

7.41 All timescales are set using a 24-hour clock and are based on British Summer Time or Greenwich Mean Time, depending on which applies at the point when Date and Time Bids shall be submitted through the Delta eSourcing Portal.

7.42 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

For these purposes, the Contracting Authority may disclose within Government any of the Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Bidder to the Contracting Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this ITQ consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

7.43 The Government introduced its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme on the 2nd April 2014 to replace the current Government Protective Marking System (GPMS). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

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

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

USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

- Contracts Finder
- Equalities Act introduction
- Bribery Act introduction
- Freedom of information Act