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Memorandum of Information and Questionnaire

Engineering Delivery Framework - Soft Market Testing

May 2021

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## **Introduction**

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) wishes to engage Suppliers in a Soft Market Testing (SMT) exercise in anticipation of the procurement of contractors for delivery of works and services under a new Science Engineering Delivery Framework which will support the redevelopment of the Animal Plant and Health Agency facility at Woodham Road Addlestone, known more commonly as APHA Weybridge.

The purpose of this SMT exercise is to optimise the procurement process for all parties. Some of the key objectives from DEFRA’s perspective being to:

* Assess and understand the structure, capability and capacity of the market, particularly concerning the specialist areas and services;
* align the procurement process with the skills, capabilities and capacity so that confidence within the market is maximised;
* understand what steps may encourage and increase market appetite;
* understand our suppliers’ supply chain requirements and any conflicting demands that may exist in the market;
* improve team integration via aligned and clearly understood requirements so that effective collaboration follows;
* understand the market’s risk tolerance for the proposed works;
* understand the market’s perception of the Client;
* assess approaches that may encourage collaboration; e.g. by softening contractual interfaces;
* explore and understand the market view of incentivisation and reward for effective collaboration and maximum productivity, and;
* provide the market with an opportunity to ask questions and raise queries at an early stage.

In summary, it is recognised that the effectiveness of the procurement process will be governed by the appetite of the firms engaging with the procurement process. Understanding the market’s view of the risks, their chances of success and their ability to meet the demands will enable us to optimise the procurement process accordingly.

## **Background to APHA Weybridge**

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) science estate in New Haw, Surrey was created in 1917 and provides the UK’s primary capability for managing the extensive and continuously evolving threats posed by the spread of high-risk diseases carried by animals.

It does this through a combination of research, surveillance, diagnostic services and disease outbreak response. The estate contains a range of facilities, including a significant area of high containment. Weybridge houses 98% of all high containment space within the APHA network and is one of only two large animal high hazard pathogen containment facilities in the UK. The work undertaken at Weybridge:

* protects us against, and allows us to respond rapidly to, animal diseases;
* protects us against the risk these diseases can pose to human health;
* protects the economy and underpins trade, and;
* underpins our status as a world leader.

The UK government has an obligation to maintain the scientific capability that safeguards the nation’s health and prosperity from both established and new threats. The world leading status will be even more important post EU-Exit: we rely on our animal health capability to underpin our reputation and trade with the EU and the rest of the world, and once outside the EU we will be responsible for setting and defending our own animal health rules.

Weybridge is the only high containment facility in Great Britain capable of delivering the benefits summarised above and requires significant investment to maintain this critical function.

The redeveloped APHA Weybridge site will be an integral part of Defra’s 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment for a Green Future.The Plan states that healthier animals will lead to more productive farming, which in turn leads to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the consumption of antimicrobials: helping tackle global issues such as the effects of climate change and the risk of antimicrobial resistance.

The animal health science capability to innovate using rapidly developing science such as genomics and data science, artificial Intelligence and machine learning to work with large data sets has benefits that go far beyond animal health, with potential applications across government science priorities.

The facility and operational requirements are all centred on commercial farming. The only exception to the species that may be accommodated in the facility would concern responses to viral outbreaks such as Rabies or Ebola where potentially infected domestic animals may require quarantine.

## **Existing Estate and Planned Investment:**

The Weybridge estate was established for its current purpose in 1917 and has been developed piece-meal over its life. Some of the remaining buildings are approaching 60 years’ service – 28% (by area) of its buildings are more than 30 years old and nearing the end of their original economic operational lives.

The Weybridge estate comprises two parts. The first being the main campus with offices, laboratories, high and low containment facilities and support. The second is the collection of fields and low containment animal facilities to the North of the main campus. The estate comprises an overall GIFA of 87,000sqm, including 20,000sqm of specialist research and animal facilities.

Significant investment in new building stock and infrastructure is required over the next ten years to maintain its critical function. The National Science Centre for Animal Health (NSCAH) masterplan development will set the compass for the transformation of the campus into a global exemplar of Animal Health Science diagnostics and research.

## **Procurement and Contracting Strategy**

It is proposed to advertise this opportunity through the publication of a contract notice in the Find a Tender (FTS) (the replacement for OJEU). This procurement will be done under a restricted procedure

The likely contract vehicle will be the NEC 4 Engineering and Construction Contract Option A and NEC Professional Services Contract.

A formal compliant PCR 2015 ‘Restricted procedure’ tender process is being considered as the preferred tender procedure, with a maximum of 4 suppliers per lot (with each lot containing further sub-lots within them based on spend thresholds) following pre-qualification, taken through to the Invitation to Tender stage. Evaluation criteria will be balanced to ensure the most economically advantageous tender is chosen, with technical aspects attracting higher weighting than price.

The likely contract vehicle will be the NEC 4 Professional Services Contract using Options A (fixed price) or E (time-charge) fees as appropriate for the defined scope of services and supply chain, including an assessment of the balance of risk (e.g. design liabilities).

## **Soft Market Testing Process**

A questionnaire accompanies this SMT document and includes **8 questions requiring responses.** Suppliers are requested to return answers in writing and may be contacted by a member of the commercial team to discuss their responses.

Due to security and confidentiality issues the documentation available as part of the Soft Market Testing process is limited to that provided within this document.

Face to face meetings may be requested with Suppliers, but this will depend largely on the level of detail provided in the returned responses. A record of phone calls and face to face meetings may form part of a findings report at the end of the SMT exercise.

The estimated timeline for this SMT process is as follows:

* SMT process commenced –24th May 2021
* SMT process concludes with responses received – 14:00 on 2st June 2021

Please note that whilst this SMT is being carried out at this present time, the proposed framework will not be in place until circa Q3 2022. As such where necessary, DEFRA will be carryon engaging with contractors via other Public Sector agreements such as CCS/NHS SBS/NHS LPP etc.

**Questionnaire**

**Please put your responses in the box below each question using no more than 200 words and please DO NOT embed any attachments.**

**Completed Questionnaires should be returned by close of business 2nd June 2021.**

|  |
| --- |
| Company Name: |
| Location: |
| Contact name: |
| Contact email: |
| Contact Telephone Number: |

**Q1;** Are there any aspects concerning this project that would prevent your organisation from submitting a bid?

This question is particularly directed toward potential concern over involvement in facilities that may involve animal testing. Whilst we reiterate that the animal testing undertaken as part of the work at APHA is solely focussed on the health and wellbeing of animals within the context of commercial farming we do understand that certain parties may be reluctant to engage and support such studies.

Please consider and provide within your response measures or further information that you would consider to be pertinent to your response or that may change your response.

**Q2;** Following pre-qualification, the current intention is to down select to 4 suppliers per lot (with each lot containing further sub-lots within them based on spend thresholds) who will be invited to submit a tender. Do you think this is an appropriate number to be invited to tender? If not, why not and what would be your proposed number?

**Q3;** If you have expressed an interest in this tender, please could you indicate which Lots you would be interested in tendering for. Please ensure to state which regional lab you may be interested in within the remarks section for each Lot (e.g. Carmarthen).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Lot** | **Weybridge** | **Regional** |  **Remarks** |
| **Yes** | **No** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Lot One – Works in Containment Facilities |  |  |  |
| Lot Two – General Accommodation & Infrastructure  |  |  |  |
| Lot 3 - Security |  |  |  |
| Lot 4 – Liquid Waste Inactivation |  |  |  |
| Lot 5 – Multi-Discipline Design Services |  |  |  |
| Lot 6 – Professional Services  |  |  |  |

**Q4;** What are your views and experience regarding the proposed use of an NEC4 contracts?

**Q5;** What are your views with regards to these possible project procurement routes which could be used within the framework?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Procurement Route** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| Traditional Route (based on RIBA Stage 3 to 4+) |  |  |  |
| Single Stage Design and Build (Based on RIBA Stage 3 & 4) |  |  |  |
| Two Stage Traditional Route (based on RIBA Stage 2) |  |  |  |
| Two-Stage Design and Build (Based on RIBA Stage 2) |  |  |  |
| EPCMV (Based on URS or RIBA Stage 2) (turnkey) |  |  |  |

**Q6:** Are you on a Public Sector framework agreement such as CCS/NHS SBS/NHS LPP If Yes, which one(s)

**Q7:** Please raise any further questions / clarifications that you consider relevant to this SMT exercise

**Q8:** Please suggest 3 SMART Key Performance Indicators which you feel may be useful in managing performance under this framework and how they could be incentivised.