

Invitation to Quote



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

Subject: Cohort Training Review

Sourcing Reference Number: PS21269

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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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.

Our Customers

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

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

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 (UKRI)

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

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 Swindon SN2 1FL
3.2.	Buyer name	Fadzanai Nyarufuro
3.3.	Buyer contact details	ProfessionalServices@uksbs.co.uk
3.4.	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£45,000.00 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 <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6.	Date of Issue of Contract Advert on Contracts Finder	Wednesday, 23 rd February 2022
3.7.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Delta eSourcing messaging system	Thursday, 3 rd March 2022 11:00 am
3.8.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Delta eSourcing Portal	Monday, 7 th March 2022
3.9.	Latest date and time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Delta eSourcing	Monday, 14 th March 2022 11:00 am
3.10.	Date Bidders should be available if clarifications are required	Monday, 21 st March 2022
3.11.	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Monday, 11 th April 2022
3.12.	Anticipated Contract Award date	Monday, 11 th April 2022
3.13.	Anticipated Contract Start date	Friday, 25 th April 2022
3.14.	Anticipated Contract End date	Thursday, 30 th June 2022
3.15.	Bid Validity Period	90 Days

Section 4 – Specification

Background

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is seeking a training and skills expert, to provide short-term expertise leading to a review of NERC's cohort training model. The project will critically review information from our Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres for Doctoral Training as well as engaging the wider research community. Ultimately, the work will inform future commissioning of NERC's doctoral training offer. Up to £45,000 is available to support this work. NERC will also be assessing the portfolio balance of investment in Talent and Skills in 2022 and there may be a need to be flexible in delivering this work to consider elements of the wider studentships portfolio.

Purpose

NERC invests in studentships delivered through the cohort training model in the form of Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) and Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs). These cohort training programmes provide postgraduate research opportunities across the NERC science remit as well as supporting the development of a diverse range of skills that are appropriate for a variety of careers. DTPs support responsive postgraduate training where the topic is chosen by the student or supervisor and can be within any area of NERC's remit. CDTs provide postgraduates with specialist skills that are linked to NERC's strategic priorities or to priority skills needs.

In 2013 NERC awarded funding through a competitive process to 15 DTPs (known as DTP1). These awards provided funding for 240 notional PhD studentships per annum across five annual cohort intakes from October 2014. Following a mid-term evaluation in 2017, NERC invested in the second phase of NERC DTPs (DTP2). In 2018 NERC awarded funding through a competitive process to 17 DTP2s to support 235 notional PhD studentships per annum across five annual cohort intakes from October 2019.

NERC awards one CDT per annum and a CDT award typically consists of funding to support three annual intakes of between eight and ten students as well as additional funding to assist in the development and delivery of the CDT training programme. The focus areas of NERC CDTs are informed through an evidence-gathering process that examines new evidence of skills gaps and training needs in addition to NERC's priorities.

As the end of the first DTP awards approaches and with three DTP2 cohorts now recruited, it is timely for NERC to review the cohort training supported to inform future commissioning of postgraduate training. Furthermore, the review will help NERC to ensure the current cohort training awards have delivered against NERC's success criteria.

Aims and Objectives of the Project

The overarching aim of this review is to explore the success of the cohort training model in the NERC remit to optimise and inform future investments. The output of the review should be a written report. The structure of the review should focus on the NERC's six success criteria for training¹ which are shown below.

- Training Excellence
- Research Excellence
- Multidisciplinary Training Environments
- Excellent Students
- Quality Assurance

¹ <https://nerc.ukri.org/skills/postgrad/policy/successcriteria/>

- Produces Success Stories

Consideration of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) should be incorporated into each of the success criteria above as appropriate. However, the review should include DEI as a separate theme. This will help NERC identify the challenges of equal access, inclusion and the diversity of the student population and what the DTPs/CDTs are doing to address these challenges. NERC will utilise this information to inform the future cohort training commissioning process (e.g., Funding Opportunity Development, assessment processes and specific terms and conditions) to ensure DTP3 and other future calls are open and accessible to all applicants.

Suggested Methodology

The report format and methodology used should be determined by the applicant but must address the six training success criteria outlined in the “Aims and Objectives” section above.

As part of the review, evidence will consist of information previously collected by NERC and includes DTP/CDT reports, destinations data, remit classification data, and anonymised studentship data. Further resources which could be utilised as part of the review include HESA data, reviews from other Research Councils², Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS – vitae³), DEI best practice for recruitment and data collection (NERC)⁴, UKRI new deal for students⁵ and the R&D People and Culture Strategy⁶.

As cohort training is delivered in conjunction with a range of stakeholders, it will be important to engage with the community in order to collect views from across partnerships. This will include DTP/CDT directors, students, non-academic partners and administrative staff (both within the DTPs/CDTs and within university research offices). The information collected from stakeholders will be used to supplement that previously held by NERC.

When submitting your bid please address the specific questions outlined in the accompanying Invitation to Quote questions document.

Deliverables

The primary output from the project should be a written report covering the following:

- A review exploring the success of NERC's cohort training structured around NERC's six success criteria for training
- Consideration of approaches to ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion within NERC's cohort training offer
- A series of recommendations to optimise and inform NERC's future training investments

The project will also involve supporting NERC's strategic decision making in the Talent and Skills portfolio by providing expert advice on the postgraduate training landscape.

² <https://www.ukri.org/news/epsrc-and-esrc-doctoral-reviews-published/>

³ <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/culture-employment-and-development-in-academic-research-survey-cedars-aggregate-results-launched>

⁴ <https://nerc.ukri.org/skills/postgrad/policy/dei-best-practice-principles-in-doctoral-recruitment/>

⁵ <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/developing-people-and-skills/new-deal-for-postgraduate-research/>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-and-development-rd-people-and-culture-strategy>

Key deliverables and milestones are outlined below:

- Attend project kick-off meeting with the funders 25th April 2022
- Agree detailed methodology and sign-off contract with UKRI by 4th May 2022
- Provide regular updates on project progress to the NERC Talent and Skills team (either in writing or through virtual meetings) to update on progress and direction of project
- Attend a project review meeting 23rd May 2022
- Submit a draft report for review (timeline TBC)
- Report addressing the aims of the work and making recommendations to NERC no later than 15th June 2022
- Presentation of results and recommendations to a task and finish group (date TBC – July 2022).

(The Natural Environment Research Council) NERC is seeking an independent individual able to provide an impartial view. Therefore, in order to avoid conflicts of interest, applications should not have a connection to active Doctoral Training Programmes or Centres for Doctoral Training.

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 ($5+5+6=16 \div 3 = 5.33$))

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	SEL1.10	Information security requirements
Commercial	SEL2.12	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Act and the Data Protection Act 2018
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information
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
Commercial	AW4.3	Conflicts of Interest
Commercial	AW4.4	Supporting Information Declaration
Commercial	AW6.3	Non-Disclosure Contract
Price	AW5.1	Maximum Budget
Price	AW5.4	E Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within 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 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	20%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Approach	20%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Staff to Deliver	20%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Understanding the Project Environment	20%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and Timescales	10%
Quality	PROJ1.5	Risk Management	10%

Evaluation of criteria

Non-Price elements

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

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

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

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

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

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

0	The Question is not answered, or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.
20	Very poor response and not wholly acceptable. Requires major revision to the response to make it acceptable. Only partially answers the requirement, with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed.
40	Poor response only partially satisfying the 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 $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

Once the above evaluation process has been undertaken and the scores are apportioned by evaluator(s) this will then be subject to an independent commercial review and moderation meeting, if required by the commercial lead, any and all changes will be formally recorded relative to the regulatory obligations associated with this procurement, so as to ensure that the procurement has been undertaken in a robust and transparent way.

Price elements will be judged on the following criteria.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This evaluation criteria will therefore not be subject to any averaging, as this is a mathematical scoring criteria, but will still be subject to a commercial review.

Evaluation process

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"> ITQ logged upon opening in alignment with UK SBS's procurement procedures. Any ITQ 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 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 Evaluation criteria.
Moderation meeting (if required to reach an award decision)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the outcomes of the Commercial review To agree final scoring for each Bid, relative rankings of the Bids
Due diligence of the Bid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Contracting Authority may request the following requirements at any stage of the Procurement. Submission of insurance documents from the Bidder Request for evidence of documents / accreditations referenced in the / Invitation to Quote response / Bid and / or Clarifications from the Bidder Taking up of Bidder references from the Bidders Customers. Financial Credit check for the Bidder
Validation of unsuccessful Bidders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To confirm contents of the letters to provide details of scoring and meaningful feedback on the unsuccessful Bidders Bid in comparison with the successful Bidders Bid.

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

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

Guidance on how to register and use the e-sourcing portal 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 90 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](#)

8.0 Freedom of information

8.4.1 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 or the Contracting Authority may be required to disclose information submitted by the Bidder to the Contracting Authority.

8.4.2 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.

8.4.3 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.

8.4.4 Where a Bidder receives a request for information under the FoIA or the EIR during the procurement, this should be immediately passed on to UK SBS or the Contracting Authority and the Bidder should not attempt to answer the request without first consulting with the Contracting Authority.

8.4.5 Bidders are reminded that the Government's transparency agenda requires that sourcing documents, including ITQ templates such as this, are published on a designated, publicly searchable web site, and, that the same applies to other sourcing documents issued by UK SBS or 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 ITQ Bidders are agreeing that their participation and contents of their Response may be made public.

8.5. Response Validity

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

8.6. Timescales

8.6.1 [Section 3](#) of the ITQ 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.

8.7. The Contracting Authority's Contact Details

8.7.1 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.

8.7.2

All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool may be submitted to Delta eSourcing on 0845 270 7050 please note this is a free self-registration website and this can be done by completing the online questionnaire at <https://uksbs.delta-esourcing.com/>

8.7.3 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.

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 “ITQ Response”	means the Bidders formal offer in response to this Invitation to Quote
“Bidder(s)”	means the organisations being invited to respond to this Invitation to Quote
“Central Purchasing Body”	means a duly constituted public sector organisation which procures supplies/services/works for and on behalf of contracting authorities
“Conditions of Bid”	means the terms and conditions set out in this ITQ relating to the submission of a Bid
“Competed Supplies/Services”	means the competed supplies/services which will be Ordered from the Contract following a Mini-Competition and are set out in the Contract
“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 Contracts Finder Contract Notice.
“Contracting Authority”	A public body regulated under the Public Procurement 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 ITQ
"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
“Find a Tender”	Means the UK Government Portal that superseded the OJEU as from 1/1/2021 https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Search
“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
“Further Competition”	means re-opening competition under a framework if applicable to this procurement
“Invitation to Quote” or “ITQ”	means this Invitation to Quote 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
“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.

“Named Procurement person ”	means the single point of contact for the Contracting Authority based in UK SBS that will be dealing with the procurement
“Order”	means an order for served by any Contracting Body on the Supplier
“Other Public Bodies”	means all Contracting Bodies except the Contracting Authority
“Supplier(s)”	means the organisation(s) awarded the Contract
“Supplies / Services / Works”	means any supplies/services and supplies or works set out at within <u>Section [4] Specification</u>