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| ***Specification Reference*** |
| *FS900280* |
| ***Specification Title*** |
| *Consumer Insights Tracker* |
| ***Contract Duration*** |
| *3 years (with annual break clauses)* |

This specification, which forms part of the Invitation to Tender (ITT), comprises of three individual sections: -

1. **SPECIFICATION:** An outline of the requirement
2. **PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE:** An estimated timetable for the procurement of the proposed requirement

## TENDER REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA: Provides

guidance to applicants on the information that should be included within tenders and on the evaluation criteria and weightings used by appraisers when assessing and scoring tenders

Tenders for FSA funded projects must be submitted through the FSA E-sourcing and contract management system, ECMS, using the following link:

<https://health-family.force.com/s/Welcome>

Failure to do so may result in the tender response not being processed by the system or the response being automatically disqualified during the evaluation stage of the tender process*.*

# THE SPECIFICATION, INCLUDING PROJECT TIMETABLE AND EVALUATION OF TENDERS

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

The Food Standards Agency is an independent Government department working across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to protect public health and consumers wider interest in food. We make sure food is safe and what it says it is.

The Agency is committed to openness, transparency and equality of treatment to all suppliers. As well as these principles, for science projects the final project report will be published on the Food Standards Agency website ([www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk/)). For science projects we may encourage contractors to publish their work in peer reviewed scientific publications wherever possible, in collaboration with the FSA. Also, in line with the Government’s Transparency Agenda which aims to encourage more open access to data held by government. Data should be made freely available in an accessible format, as fully and as promptly as possible. For social research projects, we typically publish the datasets via the FSA’s data catalogue (<https://data.food.gov.uk/catalog>). Resource implications for this should be taken into account. The mechanism for publishing underpinning data should allow the widest opportunity for to enable its re-use. Where possible, underpinning data should be included in the final project report, in tables, graphs, infographics and charts.

Where data are included in the final report, they should also be published separately in a format that can be used for further analysis. Large data sets can be provided separately in an annex to the report, and published, where possible, alongside the final report online. Where it is more appropriate to publish underpinning data in an existing database, archive, repository or other community resource, or for data to be saved in a specialist proprietary format, information will be provided on how the data can be accessed. There will be some circumstances where release of data may need to be restricted or anonymised for reasons of commercial and/or personal sensitivities.

The [FSA’s strategy (2022-2027)](https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/our-strategy) sets out our vision for the UK’s food system over the next five years with the fundamental vision being *Food you can trust.* By which we mean a food system in which:

* Food is safe
* Food is what it says it is
* Food is healthier and more sustainable

The FSA has developed seven guiding principles that set out how we want to work over the next five years. These include ‘working with and through others’ - collaborating with organisations and individuals with the right expertise to ensure our research has the greatest impact; and being ‘science and evidence led’; research is a critical element of our work, producing insights and analysis that inform our own work and the policy and practice of other organisations in the food system.

This research will provide continuous updates for stakeholders (including FSA, cross-government and non-government organisations) on consumer attitudes and behaviours on a range of topics relating to the food system. This research will also be carried out through the FSA’s capacity as an evidence generator.

# THE SPECIFICATION

## Background

The FSA pledges to protect public health and consumers' wider interests in food. As such, we need to regularly track consumer opinion and attitudes towards a range of issues affecting the food system.

Our flagship [Food and You 2 Survey](https://www.food.gov.uk/research/food-and-you-2) is conducted and published biannually, and measures self-reported consumer knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues amongst adults in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. With a large sample size and robust methodology and sampling design, this survey offers valuable insights to the FSA’s understanding of consumers. Due to its methodology and sampling approach, Food and You 2 fieldwork takes approximately 2-3 months and as an official statistic, data is available approximately 6 months after data collection. As a result, the FSA requires supplementary data that provides more timely insights (delivered during, or shortly after the month of data collection) that can provide more granular changes in consumer attitudes and behaviours overtime. More granular insights allow the FSA to monitor seasonal variations and the impacts of food incidents or other wider issues (such as financial crises) on consumer attitudes and behaviours.

In April 2020, the FSA established the COVID-19 tracking survey – a monthly tracker established to understand the impacts of the pandemic on consumers and to inform the FSA’s COVID-19 response. In September 2021, the FSA then established the CO2 tracking survey (in response to global shortages of CO2 and the potential impacts that this could have on the food system). These surveys were replaced with the Consumer Insights Tracker in November 2021, which continued many trends that were previously established in the COVID-19 and CO2 trackers, but also began monitoring new questions and topics.

The Consumer Insights Tracker currently provides monthly monitoring of consumer behaviour and attitudes on the following topics:

* + Food insecurity
  + Food availability
  + Concerns in relation to food
  + Confidence in the food supply chain
  + Confidence in the FSA

Currently, the tracker is conducted online via an online omnibus methodology using opt-in panels with a nationally representative sample of 2,000 adults across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The data is weighted to be representative of the adult population aged 16 – 75 living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland on key demographics: age, gender, working status and social grade. An elimination rule is applied to the online omnibus so that participants will not be invited to complete two consecutive surveys. For example, in a monthly survey participants would be eliminated from the sample if they had completed the survey in the month prior. Data is collected monthly on a range of questions covering the stated topics, with timeseries data available for most questions (this varies according to when the question was first asked). The Consumer Insights Tracker has several key outputs, including slides, bulletin reports, full length reports, data tables and raw data files (see outputs section for further details on each of these).

The Consumer Insights Tracker has a broad array of stakeholders including:

* FSA (internal) stakeholders including the communications team, strategy unit, analytical teams, policy colleagues and senior stakeholders (the CEO, FSA’s Chair and Executive management teams). Data from the Consumer Insights Tracker is regularly used by internal stakeholders in presentations, briefings and for press activities.
* FSA’s Advisory Committee for Social Science (ACSS): particularly the [Wider](https://acss.food.gov.uk/WCI) [consumer interests working group](https://acss.food.gov.uk/WCI).
* External, cross-government stakeholders including Cabinet office, DEFRA, Food Standards Scotland (FSS), DHSC, DWP and the ONS.
* External non-government stakeholders including organisations with a vested interest in the topics included in the tracker.

At the time of writing this specification, the Consumer Insights Tracker is undergoing a review, led by the ACSS wider consumer interests working group. This review is

designed to explore internal and external stakeholder views of the tracker, including how it is used, and to also provide recommendations on the tracker aims/objectives, methodology, survey design, outputs and quality assurance processes. Initial findings from this review have been fed into this specification, so that tenderers are aware of the FSA’s expectations for the project going forward. The final reports from the review will be made available to the winning bidder; the awarded contractor will be required to work with the FSA’s project team to develop the Consumer Insights Tracker in line with the recommendations from the review.

The rest of this specification outlines the FSA’s expectations and requirements from the appointed contractor for the Consumer Insights Tracker project going forwards.

## The Specification

The aim of this research is to understand consumer’s behaviour and perceptions on a range of topical issues (currently the Consumer Insights Tracker is focussed on collecting data on food availability, food insecurity, concerns in relation to the food industry, consumer trust/confidence in the food supply chain and in the FSA as a regulator). These insights should be collected on a monthly basis, supplementing other sources of information (namely the FSA’s Food and You 2 survey) and providing timeseries and demographic insights to key stakeholders. These insights should be representative of the adult population in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Tenderers are encouraged to read the full list of current survey questions (provided in Annex 2) to understand the range of questions currently included in the tracking survey.

It should be noted that although the FSA currently runs a Consumer Insights Tracker, the Agency is open to any changes that could improve the quality of the project, and therefore welcomes innovative suggestions from tenderers.

## Methodology

The supplier will be responsible for all aspects of the project, including recruitment, sampling, logistics and project management.

The current methodology for the Consumer Insights Tracker is outlined in the sections below. It is anticipated that the project will continue to use a similar methodology, however tenderers are encouraged to suggest alternate approaches where appropriate. Tenderers should state and justify their proposed approach to the

methodology, (including the rationale for any changes), ensuring that the stated research aims are met.

*Data collection*

Currently, data for the Consumer Insights Tracker is collected monthly, using an online omnibus (sampled from opt-in online panels) where participants fill out a series of questions over a period of approximately 4 days each month.

The FSA anticipates that the project will continue to follow similar timescales to the ones in use currently, with monthly delivery of data. Please see Annex 5 for an example of the existing monthly timetable. Please note that it is not essential for exact timings to remain the same. However, to ensure consistency with the existing data, it is anticipated that data will continue to be collected over a weekend mid- month.

Unless tenderers can provide a justified reason for breaking the existing timeseries (for example, improved data quality or accuracy), the FSA would like to maintain the established timeseries for the existing survey wherever possible, as well as the sampling and recruitment approach.

Please state and justify the proposed data collection method for this research. Within this, tenderers should also:

* + State and justify the expected timescales of data delivery.
  + Outline if FSA questions will be asked within a longer questionnaire (where non-FSA questions are also responded to by participants). Tenderers should consider and outline how this could impact the quality of the data collected, including if there could be impacts from questions on similar topics being asked prior to FSA questions in the same survey. If relevant, tenderers should outline if questions are asked in the same order during each wave, and where FSA questions would be anticipated to be in this order.
  + Demonstrate experience and expertise in conducting robust and nationally representative tracker surveys.
  + Demonstrate experience and expertise in designing and collecting data on both ‘close-ended’ and ‘open-ended’ survey questions. If you do not have the required expertise within your organisation, please outline which organisation(s) you will partner with to fulfil the requirements for this project.
  + Outline the ways in which future topics could be forecasted and monitored. The topics covered by the Consumer Insights Tracker are likely to change depending on the wider social and political context. Tenders must be willing to work with the FSA to ensure that the tracker questions remain relevant and

useful, and should demonstrate a proactive and flexible approach to this issue. It is desirable but not essential that tenderers have experience and knowledge of the food sector and context, in order to fulfil this requirement, which should be noted in the response.

*Sampling / Recruitment*

Currently, participants are recruited and sampled via an online omnibus (opt-in). The sample size for each wave is approximately 2000 adults (aged 16-75), and quotas are used to ensure that the sample is representative of key demographic characteristics. The final sample is also weighted to ensure that it is nationally representative of age, gender, region, working status and social grade. The sample covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Participants are screened to prevent them from completing the tracker in two consecutive months.

In your response, please ensure that the following is outlined and justified:

* + The proposed sampling method to achieve the stated research aims and to ensure that data are sufficiently robust. Please also state and justify the proposed sample size for each wave.
  + Tenderers should indicate if and how quotas will be used to achieve a representative sample.
  + The representativeness of the sample should enable the differences between demographic groups to be captured. Tenderers should state which demographics it will be possible to capture robustly (enabling between group comparison) and how each of these are measured. Tenders should identify if there are any groups at risk of underrepresentation due to the proposed methodology, and indicate how this will be mitigated (if at all).
  + Tenderers should demonstrate experience and ability to conduct research across various geographic regions, and across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Historically, the FSA have been unable to compare England with Wales and Northern Ireland due to the small sample obtained in these nations. If possible, the FSA welcomes tenderers to explain how boosted samples in the devolved nations could be achieved to enable comparisons across the 3 nations. Tenderers should clearly outline the minimum sample that could be achieved in each nation if boosts were required.
  + Although the FSA’s main remit is England, Wales and Northern Ireland, it is possible that the FSA will collaborate with Food Standards Scotland (FSS) in the future, so tenderers should state their ability to meet a request to attain an

additional representative sample in Scotland. There are no current plans to include Scotland in the survey sample.

* + Please state how participants will be recruited, and any methods that will be employed to ensure that a robust and representative sample is recruited for each wave of data collection. This should detail where participants are recruited from (e.g. the wider sample population), and the characteristics of this group (including size). This should also cover how participants are invited to opt-in. Tenderers should also detail if and how there would be controls in place to prevent the same sample of participants repeatedly filling out the tracker survey.
  + Please also outline if/ how incentives could be used.
  + If tenderers plan to use any recruitment agencies or subcontractors for their research, details of this must be outlined in the response.

*Survey Design*

The FSA’s social science team work closely with relevant teams within the FSA (including policy, communications, strategy, strategic insights and incidents) to develop new survey questions. Where possible, the FSA use existing survey questions or the Government Statistical Service (GSS) [harmonised standards](https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/government-statistical-service-and-statistician-group/gss-support/gss-harmonisation-support/harmonised-standards-and-guidance/). Where needed, the social science team also liaise with the members of the independent [Advisory Committee for Social Science](https://acss.food.gov.uk/) (ACSS) to develop or review survey questions. These contacts may also be called upon to advise on key aspects of the project, as needed. In the past, the FSA have worked in close relationship with the appointed contractor to finalise survey questions.

Tenders should note that the FSA require an experienced contractor who is versed in survey questionnaire design and has experience of working with policy customers. It is also desirable (not essential) for tenders to hold relevant knowledge in existing research that relate to the topics outlined above (particularly other tracking surveys). Tenders who do not hold this knowledge may need to commit time to becoming accustomed to relevant datasets and surveys, in order to add to the FSA’s awareness of other research in the same area. Tenderers should acknowledge their relevant experience or commitments to developing their knowledge in their response.

*Cognitive Testing*

It is possible that the FSA would like to carry out cognitive testing of the survey questions.

As part of the bid, tenderers should indicate and justify their suggested approach to the cognitive testing of all survey questions. This should cover the existing questions currently in use for the tracker (where they will remain unchanged) (see Annex 4) as well as any new questions that will be drafted during project set-up. Tenderers should also state the process which will be followed for the cognitive testing of any questions which might be incorporated into the tracker at a later date to address future policy and/or strategy needs. Tenderers should outline how this testing will be carried out to ensure that questions are robust and effective, as well as how this would be most appropriate given resourcing and timescales. Costs for cognitive testing should be provided separately in the financial template.

## Analysis and Interpretation

Tenderers should indicate how data will be analysed for each wave of data (covering aspects such as significance testing, effect size estimates and confidence intervals as appropriate). A full analytical plan is required to ensure that this work is transparent and robust. Tenderers should indicate what types of data analysis would be supplied to the FSA each month, and what types of analysis would be available for the full written reports (see Outputs section). It is anticipated that tenderers will have the organisational expertise and resource to carry out more in-depth statistical analysis for the full reports, in order to fully explore the data in ways that are not feasible month-to-month. Tenderers should outline their suggestions for this, which could include time-series analysis (amongst other statistical methods).

Tenderers should indicate the data analysis that could be available on an ad-hoc basis (to meet unanticipated policy and/or strategy needs). It’s likely that the FSA will require the production of short reports, slides or infographics for the Consumer Insights Tracker data. Tenderers should give details of how they could fulfil this ask and give examples of previous experience as required.

On some occasions, the FSA include open-ended options in the tracker survey (such as ‘Other – please specify) which allow respondents to include extra information.

Tenderers should outline how any open responses would be analysed and presented to the FSA; including the analytical approach used and how this would be quality assured.

## Outputs

With support from the existing contractor, the FSA currently produce the following outputs for the Consumer Insights Tracker (where possible, examples are linked or provided in the annex). Tenderers should outline their approach to producing equivalent, or improved products:

* + Monthly slide deck: This currently combines the Consumer Insights Tracker with other relevant FSA analysis in relation to consumers (the collation of this FSA data is currently carried out in-house but is subject to review). Slides provide a visual overview of key findings each month and are shared across the FSA and across Government but are not published on the FSA website due to accessibility issues. Although these slides are well received by internal stakeholders as a useful way of visually presenting the data, the FSA welcomes suggestions of outputs that could meet accessibility needs through a different format (and would therefore be able to be published externally if required). The FSA welcomes innovative suggestions on how best to provide this information monthly to the wide range of stakeholders who use the tracker (identified in ‘Background’ Section), which includes non-analytical colleagues. This could include aspects such as infographics, a monthly ‘dashboard’ or a detailed written summary. Tenderers should outline how monthly outputs would be made suitable for a range of audiences.
  + Monthly bulletin reports (published): These bulletins provide a written overview of the latest monthly data. Bulletins are published monthly and allow the FSA to publicly quote and use the data ([example of monthly bulletin](https://www.food.gov.uk/research/consumer-insights-tracker-monthly-bulletin-september-2022) for Sept 22). These bulletins are currently produced in-house, but tenderers are encouraged to suggest how this output (or its equivalent) could be fulfilled by the supplier.
  + [Full reports (published)](https://www.food.gov.uk/research/emerging-challenges-and-opportunities/consumer-insights-tracker-report-key-findings-from-december-2021-to-march-2022) are produced periodically to provide commentary of timeseries analysis and demographic differences for key variables. These reports should contain more in-depth statistical analysis of demographic differences that can account for complexities within the data. Historically, the FSA has produced these reports sporadically on an ad-hoc basis but would like to move to a more regular publication cycle (for example, annually or biannually). Historically, the FSA have produced these reports in-house, but the FSA would like to consider options for commissioning these types of reports to the appointed contractor. It is desirable but not essential for suppliers to have the resource and expertise to include analysis which compares tracker data to other data sources where appropriate (both FSA and external).
  + Monthly data tables: these data tables include overall trends, demographic breaks, and significance testing of aggregate data. These tables are made publicly available via [the FSA data catalogue](https://data.food.gov.uk/catalog/datasets/ed0b4411-ee3d-452c-97b4-f3f1f1146ff1) and [via data.gov.uk](https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/996266bd-7820-4804-8d00-ef474e06c322/consumer-insights-tracking-survey) every month alongside the monthly bulletins. The FSA requires that all data is provided in an accessible and re-usable format.
  + Monthly raw data files: for internal analysis, the FSA requires full raw datasets in SPSS or CSV format. These datasets should be presented in a format that enables further analysis (e.g. variables should be named logically and consistently). These are not publicly available but can be made available to individuals on request (in agreement with the FSA).
  + Technical report: Although the FSA have not published a technical report historically, we would like the new contractor to be able to produce this, for improved transparency. This report will be published alongside full reports. This should cover the methodology of the tracker in detail, including, as a minimum, participant recruitment (including incentivisation), sampling, data collection, data analysis and quality assurance processes. This report should justify the tracker methodology, as well as incorporating insights into why the data produced is not comparable to other FSA publications due to methodological differences (namely Food & You 2). The purpose of the technical report will be to allow readers of the tracker report to understand the quality and reliability of the data, and links to the agency’s policy of openness and transparency.

Tenderers are invited to suggest similar and/or alternative styles of outputs in order to distribute regular findings from the tracker. Please outline in your response any suitable equivalent outputs to present findings in a way that is clear and engaging for stakeholders to use. Where appropriate, tenderers are encouraged to use relevant [EQUATOR](https://www.equator-network.org/) network checklists for the reporting of results.

Tenderers are invited to submit examples of outputs from previous projects as part of their application to demonstrate their experience in producing a range of engaging outputs (please do not submit more than 3 examples). The FSA’s project team are committed to continually improving their outputs for the benefit of their key stakeholders, with this in mind we require a contractor who is able to deliver high- quality outputs at pace; for example, infographics, reports, dashboards and slide- decks. All outputs must strictly adhere to the FSA’s accessibility and branding guidelines (see accessibility section). At least one of the examples provided should meet these guidelines, or it should be demonstrated how the output could be adapted to be accessible.

All outputs should be anonymised before being shared with the FSA. All outputs will require sign-off from the FSA project team prior to publication and dissemination (this is discussed further in the Quality Management section of the ITT). This process should be factored into any timetables produced. It is expected that the supplier will

work with the FSA project team to create the outputs to ensure that they fit the needs of all stakeholders.

## Organisational Experience, Expertise and Staff Effort

*Please note, we welcome applications from all suppliers; including those with no previous experience working with the FSA, large suppliers, SMEs, single entities, academic institutions and partnerships that combine any of these.*

Tenderers should complete the tender application form, providing evidence of up to three relevant projects that the project’s lead applicant and/or members of the project team are currently undertaking or have recently completed. Applications may also include suggested changes to the existing Consumer Insights Tracker research, as long as these are fully justified.

If available, tenders should provide evidence of working on successful and robust tracking surveys, engaging with a range of stakeholder groups throughout the research process, including dissemination, as well as collecting and using nationally representative data. If possible, tenderers should also demonstrate their ability to deliver fast paced, high quality research such as tracking surveys (i.e., commissioning surveys, and delivering outputs monthly or more frequently).

Tenderers should have experience in collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data.

Tenders should provide details of all key personnel who will be working on the project, including key contacts and partnerships. Should any element of this contract be subcontracted, this must also be stated in proposals with details of subcontracted companies, their key personnel, and working arrangements with subcontractors.

Tenderers should note that the successful contractor will be required to appoint a main point of contact who will be fully accountable for the Consumer Insights Tracker contract. They will be required to liaise closely with the FSA’s nominated project officers.

## Project Management

Tenders should describe how the project will be managed to ensure that objectives and deliverables will be achieved on time and within budget. Tenders should also describe how different organisations/staff will interact to deliver the desired outcomes and highlight any in-house or external accreditation for any project management systems in use and how this relates to the contract arrangement. Please outline the experience, qualifications and amount of resource each member of staff will bring to this project.

On appointment, the successful contractor will be required to attend an initial start-up meeting with the Agency (estimated to take place in May 2023). The successful contractor must ensure that they keep in regular contact with the FSA representative(s). The successful contractor will be required to attend meetings to discuss and develop the tracker (especially during project set-up), as well as regular contract review meetings. Project management meetings are likely to occur fortnightly, and contract review meetings are likely to occur at least quarterly (exact timings to be agreed between FSA and successful contractor). The appointed contractor may also be required to attend meeting with key stakeholders for the Consumer Insights Tracker, to ensure that the project meets customer needs.

Meetings between the FSA and appointed supplier will be remote by default, using Microsoft Teams, with some occasional in-person meetings as per business need

Throughout the contract period, the successful contractor is encouraged to consider continuous improvements with regards to day-to-day communication and project management as well as innovative ideas and suggestions for improving outputs and dissemination of findings.

Tender applications should include a detailed timeline from commission to final output delivery as part of the response. This should include milestones such as project set-up, cognitive testing, review points, and the analysis and drafting of the full published reports.

Tenderers should also include a proposed timetable to be adapted and used for each wave of the tracker. Please see Annex 5 for an example timetable used in October 2022. Tenderers must have the resource and capacity to follow a similarly fast-paced timetable for each wave of the tracker. The Agency would also welcome suggestions for how current FSA actions (carried out in-house) could be carried out by the supplier instead. Monthly milestones will be agreed and signed off by the FSA project team and appointed supplier in advance.

## Risk Management

Tenders must complete a detailed risk register, including mitigations, for their proposal.

It is desirable but not essential for tenderers to hold [ISO 31000 - Risk management](http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/iso31000.htm).

## Quality Management

Tenders should provide details of the measures that will be taken to manage and ensure the quality of work. Please include details of the quality assurance policies in

place and how this will ensure the quality of projects and robustness of data. Tenderers should take note of the FSA’s quality assurance processes. It is desirable but not essential for tenderers to hold [ISO 9001 - Quality management](http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards/management-standards/iso_9000.htm).

Through regular updates and contract review meetings, the FSA will monitor the suppliers ongoing performance, ensuring that the project is progressing to plan. Invoices will be paid upon completion of each wave of the tracker and when the FSA has received and signed off all agreed outputs. Ad-hoc reports will also be paid for, upon receipt of the final version being signed off by project officers at the FSA.

Tenders should detail how quality management will be undertaken each month to ensure that outputs are produced according to agreed monthly timescales, ready for dissemination as appropriate. Tenders should also outline how this quality management will act to prevent any inaccuracies within the data (e.g. robotic responses, false participants), the monitoring processes to ensure that any errors or issues with the data are identified as soon as possible, and the process for dealing with any such problems (including informing the FSA and steps to mitigate any damage).

The appointed contractor will be asked to provide a detailed account of their quality assurance processes for the FSA’s record, which outlines how quality assurance is managed throughout all stages of the project.

Quality management considerations should be given as to whether any particular standards need to be met. If the project includes any mathematical modelling, the quality assurance considerations need to include how the work will meet the standards [in the Aqua Book](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-aqua-book-guidance-on-producing-quality-analysis-for-government). The [Joint Code of Practice for Research](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-code-of-practice-for-research-jcopr) sets out standards for the quality of science and the quality of research processes.

The Government statistical service (GSS) also produce helpful guides on [producing](https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/GUIDANCE-document-Effective-charts-and-tables-in-official-statistics-Version-2.0-Jan2017.pdf) [quality graphs and tables](https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/GUIDANCE-document-Effective-charts-and-tables-in-official-statistics-Version-2.0-Jan2017.pdf), and on [data visualisation](https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/introduction-to-data-visualisation/). These should be utilised as a guide to best practice.

All outputs and research materials will be reviewed and signed off by the FSA. The FSA may choose to peer review outputs and materials as appropriate.

Tenderers should also outline how regular reviews of the survey script and methodology could be undertaken to ensure that the tracker remains a useful and robust product. This process should also be factored into the proposed timetable (see Project Management section).

## Innovation

Tenders should describe how innovation will be used to enhance the Consumer Insights Tracker. Innovative methods proven to add value are welcomed at every stage of our projects; these could include, but are not limited to:

* Recruitment approaches – particularly to ensure national representativeness, boosted samples in Wales and Northern Ireland, or improved representation of specific groups (such as ethnic minorities, those with disabilities or older participants).
* Quality assurance – for example automated or AI software to detect robotic or false responses.
* Data collection methods
* Data analysis –for example automated or AI qualitative analysis, or innovative visualisation approaches.
* Collaborative working – online tools, sharing between supplier, FSA and external partners.
* Dissemination and presentation of outputs – engaging and accessible formats in addition to traditional reporting.

## Ethics

Tenders should identify any ethical issues relevant to this project and give details of how any specific risks will be addressed. As some of the topics covered in the tracker are potentially emotive for participants, tenderers should account for this when discussing potential ethical risks, and how this could be managed appropriately.

Tenders should refer to the six principles outlined in the [GSR Professional Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethical-assurance-guidance-for-social-research-in-government) [– Ethical Assurance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethical-assurance-guidance-for-social-research-in-government):

1. Clear and defined public benefit
2. Sound application, conduct and interpretation
3. Data protection regulations
4. Specific and informed consent
5. Enabling participation
6. Minimising personal and social harm

Tenders should provide details of any ethical review and research governance arrangements that would apply to the project.

The successful contractor will be required to complete the [GSR Ethics checklist](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F1000709%2F2021-GSR_Ethics_Checklist.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) alongside the FSA project lead, to ensure that the research is conducted in line with the 6 ethical principles highlighted above.

## Data protection

Contractors are responsible for ensuring that all necessary permissions are acquired for the use of data, visuals, or other materials throughout projects that are subject to copyright law, and that the materials are used in accordance with the permissions that have been secured. Contractors are also responsible for ensuring suitable referencing of materials in all project outputs including project data.

Please outline in your tender how you will comply with the GDPR, recognising the commissioning authority’s role as the ‘data controller’ and the contractor’s role as the ‘data processor’, and responding to the sections below. If successful you may also be asked to carry out a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA), and a privacy notice may be required, which will be reviewed by the FSA data security team.

The Data Processor must:

* process any personal data only on the documented instructions of the Controller;
* comply with security obligations equivalent to those imposed on the Controller (implementing a level of security for the personal data appropriate to the risk);
* ensure that persons authorised to process the personal data have committed themselves to confidentiality or are under an appropriate statutory obligation of confidentiality;
* only appoint Sub-processors with the Controller’s prior specific or general written authorisation, and impose the same minimum terms imposed on it on the Sub-processor; and the original Processor will remain liable to the Controller for the Sub-processor’s compliance. The Sub-processor must provide sufficient guarantees to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to demonstrate compliance. In the case of general written authorisation, Processors must inform Controllers of intended changes in their Sub-processor arrangements;
* make available to the Controller all information necessary to demonstrate compliance with the obligations laid down in Article 28 GDPR and allow for and contribute to audits, including inspections, conducted by the Controller or another auditor mandated by the Controller - and the Processor shall immediately inform the controller if, in its opinion, an instruction infringes GDPR or other EU or member state data protection provisions;
* assist the Controller in carrying out its obligations with regard to requests by data subjects to exercise their rights under chapter III of the GDPR, noting different rights may apply depending on the specific legal basis for the processing activity (and should be clarified by the Controller up-front);
* assist the Controller in ensuring compliance with the obligations to implementing a level of security for the personal data appropriate to the risk, taking into account the nature of processing and the information available to the Processor;
* assist the Controller in ensuring compliance with the obligations to carry out Data Protection Impact Assessments, taking into account the nature of processing and the information available to the Processor; and
* notify the Controller without undue delay after becoming aware of a personal data breach.

## Data security

Please confirm in your tender that you have in place, or that you will have in place by contract award, the human and technical resources to perform the contract to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and to ensure the protection of the rights of data subjects.

Please provide details of the technical facilities and measures (including systems and processes) you have in place, or will have in place by contract award, to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and to ensure the protection of the rights of data subjects. Your response should include, but should not be limited to facilities and measures:

* to ensure ongoing confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of processing systems and services;
* to comply with the rights of data subjects in respect of receiving privacy information, and access, rectification, deletion and portability of personal data;
* to ensure that any consent based processing meets standards of active, informed consent, and that such consents are recorded and auditable;
* to ensure legal safeguards are in place to legitimise transfers of personal data outside the EU (if such transfers will take place);
* to maintain records of personal data processing activities; and
* to regularly test, assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the above measures.’

Please also indicate the processes that you have in place to facilitate the secure transfer of information (including raw data) where appropriate and at the FSA’s request. As Controller, the FSA reserves the right to share raw data with third parties for secondary analysis as appropriate.

## Dissemination and exploitation

The Agency is committed to openness and transparency. It is the agency’s intention to use the provided data to create monthly bulletins which will be published on the [FSA website](https://www.food.gov.uk/). The underpinning datasets will also be published on the Agency’s open access [data catalogue](https://data.food.gov.uk/catalog). Data should be published in an open, accessible and re-usable format, such that the data can be made available to future researchers and the maximum benefit is derived from it (see section on accessibility).

It is also the intention of the agency to publish regular research reports (as outlined in ‘Outputs’ section of this ITT) on the Food Standards Agency website ([www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk/)). We may encourage contractors to publish their work in peer reviewed scientific publications wherever possible (to be agreed with the FSA project team as appropriate). In addition to the publication of reports and any data, tenderers are invited to present any additional proposals of how best to disseminate findings to achieve maximum impact with both internal and external stakeholders.

The FSA is committed to continually improving the dissemination of this research and would like to know how Tenderers can contribute towards dissemination. This may include, for example:

* Improving outputs for different audiences
* Developing our list of stakeholders to include more contacts and broader groups to increase the reach of this research
* Supporting the FSA in the promotion of the research in different settings and to different audiences (for example, at conferences, events, in articles and blog posts)

## Social value

Social value has a lasting impact on individuals, communities and the environment. The Government has an opportunity and responsibility to maximise benefits effectively and comprehensively through its commercial activity. To be effective, it is essential that the FSA considers social value at all stages of the procurement life cycle. In order to do this, the FSA is applying the Government Commercial Functions social value model [PPN 06/20 Procurement Policy Note](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F921437%2FPPN-06_20-Taking-Account-of-Social-Value-in-the-Award-of-Central-Government-Contracts.pdf&data=05%7C01%7C%7C2217128d4d8744f884f708da59b89c8e%7C8a1c50f901b74c8aa6fa90eb906f18e9%7C0%7C0%7C637920946673034342%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=sAB3tGGnAF3hZ%2FbwG1LgamSghLy0h7BWydfRPq4Wt3s%3D&reserved=0) from 1st January 2021. The complete set of documents can be found on the [Social Value webpage](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Fprocurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts&data=05%7C01%7C%7C2217128d4d8744f884f708da59b89c8e%7C8a1c50f901b74c8aa6fa90eb906f18e9%7C0%7C0%7C637920946673034342%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=HUEu7UYMyUXDWP8W8GTp6kvc9lqhouJwsQ1ODYYsfhg%3D&reserved=0).

Using a maximum of 3000 characters tenderers should describe the commitment your organisation will make to ensure that opportunities under the contract deliver the **Policy Outcome** and **Award Criteria**.

The **Policy Outcome** selected for this tender is **‘Wellbeing – Improve health and wellbeing’.** Tenderers should describe how they will demonstrate action to support health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health, in the contract workforce (**Award Criteria**).

Please include:

* Your ‘Method Statement’, stating how you will achieve this and how your commitment meets the Award Criteria, and
* a timed project plan and process, including how you will implement your commitment and by when. Also, how you will monitor, measure and report on your commitments/the impact of your proposals. You should include but not be limited to:
  + timed action plan
  + use of metrics
  + tools/processes used to gather data
  + reporting
  + feedback and improvement
  + transparency Examples could include:
* Understanding of issues relating to health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health, in the contract workforce.
* Actions to invest in the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the contract workforce. Illustrative examples:
  + implementing the 6 standards in the Mental Health at Work commitment and, where appropriate, the mental health enhanced standards for companies with more than 500 employees in Thriving at Work with respect to the contract workforce, not just ‘following the recommendations’
  + public reporting by the tenderer and its supply chain on the health and wellbeing of staff comprising the contract workforce, following the recommendations in the Voluntary Reporting Framework
  + engagement plans to engage the contract workforce in deciding the most important issues to address

## Sustainability

The Food Standards Agency is committed to improving sustainability in the management of operations. Tenders should demonstrate a clear approach to sustainability, in particular how it will be applied in practice to projects under the call- off contract, taking into account economic, environmental and social aspects.

## Accessibility

All outputs should meet the [Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations (PSBAR)](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.legislation.gov.uk%2Fuksi%2F2018%2F852%2Fcontents%2Fmade&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cff2b9db66fd44fb0383508daa2c174e5%7C8a1c50f901b74c8aa6fa90eb906f18e9%7C0%7C0%7C638001249008586493%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=nE5rjRXFvSMxpuKrfpelimXyPeEMJ49BHno%2FPlkIVB0%3D&reserved=0) WCAG 2.1 at level AA and be written to a high standard in Plain English. It is the responsibility of the contractor to design and produce fully accessible content. The supplier must send the accessibility document report if requested by the FSA to show full compliance. Outputs should be written in line with the FSA brand guidelines (see [this link to our branding guidelines online](https://fsa.frontify.com/d/EFmxfa6xzAAW/brand-guidelines%23/introduction-to-our-branding/how-to-use-our-branding)) and accessible document requirements (See Annex 1).

Wherever possible, contractors should also meet the accessibility criteria for the production of spreadsheets and data; [as per the guidance provided by GSS](https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/making-spreadsheets-accessible-a-brief-checklist-of-the-basics/).

The FSA now publishes in HTML format by default. All outputs that will be published via the FSA website, must be produced in a format that can be converted into HTML by our communications team.

## Budget

The maximum budget for this project is £70,000 for Financial Year 23/24. Please note that this specification is for a three year contract (with annual break clauses).

Please include in your proposal the costings you believe are reasonable to meet the research activities outlined in this specification and provide the justification for

this. Tenders should also include details of any additional deliverables/activities that they are able to offer that would add additional benefit or value to this project; any costs associated with these additional deliverables should not exceed the proposed budget.

When outlining the proposed costs, tenders should break down the costings according to:

* Initial project set-up costs
* Costs per wave (for any costs incurred on project management and per question). The Agency anticipates that there could be differing costs per question according to question type. Where applicable this should be indicated.
* Outputs (according to output type)
* Potential cognitive testing (costs should be organised according to the proposed approach indicated above)
* Any other associated project costs not covered by the above

Tenderers should be aware that one of the key criteria that all research proposals are evaluated against is ‘value for money’ which is delivering the research asked for in the research requirement (including the anticipated outputs and benefits) at a competitive price.

**Annex 1- Accessible documents requirements**



**Annex 2 – FSA Branding Guidelines**



**Annex 3 – GSS Accessibility Guidelines (for spreadsheets)**

[Making spreadsheets accessible: a checklist of the basics – Government Analysis](https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/making-spreadsheets-accessible-a-brief-checklist-of-the-basics/) [Function (civilservice.gov.uk)](https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/making-spreadsheets-accessible-a-brief-checklist-of-the-basics/)

## Annex 4 – Current Survey Questions (October 2022)



Consumer Insights Tracker Survey Ques

**Annex 5 – Example monthly timetable (October 2022)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Contractor Action** | **FSA Action** |
| 01/10/11 – 11/10/22 | Draft/adjust questionnaire | Draft/adjust questionnaire |
| 11/10/22 | Sign-off questionnaire | Sign-off questionnaire |
| 14/10/22 – 16/10/22 | Fieldwork |  |
| 18/10/22 | Data tables sent to FSA |  |
| 20/10/22 | Draft slide deck sent to FSA | Receive and review slide deck (QA) |
| 21/10/22 | Amend any slides as required by FSA.  Sign-off final slide deck | Sign-off final slide deck |
| 22/10/22 – 25/10/22 |  | Liaise with other analytic teams within the FSA for other relevant analysis to include in the tracker slide deck  Draft dissemination email (including executive summary)  Draft monthly bulletin for publication  QA monthly bulletin |
| 25/10/22 |  | Send monthly bulletin to FSA Comms team |
| 25/10/22 |  | Disseminate final slide deck internally |
| w/c 07/11/22 |  | Stakeholder engagement prior to bulletin publication |
| 15/11/22 |  | Publication of bulletin Publication of data tables (on Open Data catalogue and data.gov.uk) |

# PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

Table 1 details an **estimated** project timetable for the project. Tenderers should however be aware that the Agency needs to acquire the evidence outlined in this ITT in a timely manner and you should justify your timings in your work plan.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TABLE 1. ESTIMATED PROJECT TIMETABLE** | |
| **EXPECTED DATE** | **INVITATION TO (ITT) TENDER** |
| 23/03/2023 | Invitation to Tender (ITT) issued by the Agency |
| Immediately as above | ITT Clarification period opens\* |
| 11/04/2023 at 12:00  Noon | ITT Clarification period closes\*\* |
| 24/04/2023 at 12:00  Noon | Closing date for submission of ITT responses\*\*\* |
| To commence immediately after closing date | Evaluation of ITT responses |
| w/c 01/05/2023 | Appraisal panel meeting held to consider clarified ITT responses |
| w/c 08/05/2023 | Tenderers notified of outcome of appraisal and preferred Tenderer (or Tenderers) identified |
| May 2023 | Contract awarded and signed |
| As soon as possible following contract award | Project initiation meeting takes place and project commences |

\* If a Tenderer wishes to raise any points of clarification over the procurement process, the actual project objectives or any other query these must be raised through the ECMS by the date specified.

\*\* Queries will not be answered after this date.

\*\*\* Submissions must be uploaded onto the ECMS before the closing date and time.

## Further Information

For any technical queries, points of clarification regarding this specification, queries regarding the use of ECMS or the procurement procedures please submit through ECMS

## Closing Date

Tenders should be submitted on ECMS **by the date specified on ECMS.**

## Tenders received after this time will not be considered or evaluated. Please allow sufficient time to upload your tender and all supporting evidence before the closing date.

**Notification of Submission of Tender**

On successfully submitting your tender you should see a popup box appear on the screen indicating that your tender has been successfully submitted. In addition you will receive an automatic email from ECMS with a reference code.

# EVALUATION OF TENDERS

The Tenderers Application consists of the:

* + Technical envelope (80% of overall value), in which applicants should detail the approach, the work plan and their ability to undertake the work, and
  + Commercial envelope (20% of overall value), in which applicants should outline all costs to conduct the proposed work, and
  + Any other relevant supporting information

Tenders will be evaluated by FSA internal appraisers and external experts using a numerical system. The table below shows the weightings that have been allocated to each section of the application form and these will be used by the appraisers:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TABLE 2. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF SUCCESSFUL TENDERER** | |
| **CRITERIA** | **PERCENTAGE WEIGHTINGS** |
| TECHNICAL CRITERIA – **80% overall Value** | Made up of |
| 1. Tender summary and objectives and the approach/scope of work, including innovation | 15% |
| 2. The plan and deliverables | 15% |
| 3. Organisational experience, expertise and staff effort | 10% |
| 4. Project management | 10% |
| 5. Risk management | 5% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 6. Quality management, ethics, data protection, dissemination and sustainability | 15% |
| 7. Social Value: Wellbeing - Improve health and wellbeing | 10% |
| COMMERCIAL CRITERIA – **20% overall value** | 20% |

### *The Technical Envelope*

The Technical envelope is split in to 7 sections for evaluation. Guidance on how to complete each section is provided within the actual application form.

A numerical appraisal scoring system will be used to assess the information given in the Technical envelope of the tender. Appraisers will allocate a score of 0, 30, 60, 80 or 100 to each part of the Technical envelope, depending on the quality and relevance of evidence provided. The scores will then be subjected to the weightings given in Table 2.

All technical criteria will be evaluated as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SCORE | DESCRIPTION FOR SCORE OF EACH CRITERIA |
| 100 | Tender fully meets or exceeds the criteria set |
| 80 | Tender would require minor modification but almost fully meets the criteria with only a few gaps in the evidence remaining |
| 60 | Tender would require some modification but addresses most of the criteria, but may not be detailed enough and/or has several gaps remaining |
| 30 | Tender would require significant modification due to significant gaps |
| 0 | Tender does not meet the specification or policy |

If the applicant does not reach a minimum score of 30 in the technical evaluation they will be automatically eliminated from the process.

### *The Commercial Envelope*

The Commercial envelope is split in to 5 sections. Guidance on how to complete each section is provided within the actual application form.

A numerical appraisal scoring system will be used to assess the information given in the commercial envelope of the tender. Appraisers will allocate a score of 0, 30, 60,

80 or 100 to the financial envelope, depending on the quality and relevance of evidence provided. The scores will then be subjected to the weighting given in Table 2.

## Requirement for the commercial envelope

Please complete the Commercial template provided. Costs should be quoted excluding VAT for the purpose of comparison of tenders. The Agency’s financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March. All costings should be recorded in line with this timescale.

**Evaluation of the commercial envelope Commercial criteria will be evaluated as follows:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SCORE | DESCRIPTION FOR SCORE OF THE CRITERIA |
| 100 | There is full justification for the costs and the overall resources are appropriate. The tender is the best value for money for the work proposed to meet the specific evidence requirement advertised |
| 80 | There is some justification for the costs and the overall resources requested. The tender is reasonable value for money for the work proposed to meet the specific evidence requirement advertised. |
| 60 | Limited rational is given for the resources requested and/or the tender does not offer very good value for money, but is not poor value |
| 30 | The tender is relatively poor value for money with little/no justification for costs or resources requested. |
| 0 | The tender costs are not considered value for money and the applicant provided no rationale for costs or resources requested |
|  |  |