**DRAFT PRELIMINARY MARKET ENGAGEMENT NOTICE**

**NUTS CODE -** UK

**CPV CODES**

**II.1.2) Main CPV code**

**33616000 - Vitamins**

Additional CPV code(s)

* 73000000 - Research and development services and related consultancy services
* 73200000 - Research and development consultancy services
* 73210000 – Research consultancy services
* 73220000 - Development consultancy services

**Short Description**

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) is a Special Health Authority and an Arm’s Length Body of the Department of Health and Social Care. We provide a range of critical central services to NHS organisations (our ‘clients’), NHS contractors, health bodies, patients and the public (our ‘customers’).

The NHS Business Services Authority is seeking a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in food supplements, with specific expertise in vitamins, to provide support to the project team at the NHSBSA responsible for the procurement of the framework agreements for the manufacturing and supply of the women’s and children’s Healthy Start Vitamins framework agreements.

The SME will be required to provide advice to the NHSBSA when procuring the framework agreements for the manufacture and supply of the women’s and children’s vitamin products and during the term of the subsequent framework agreements. The requirements of this post will include the considerations identified below:

**Requirements gathering and tender publication phase for the women’s and children’s Healthy Start Vitamins framework agreements:**

The NHSBSA requires the subject matter expert to provide advice and support with particular regard to:-

* The type of product proposed, including its shelf-life, ease of use, flavouring, dosage, and overages;
* Advice on areas such as sourcing of materials, standards and testing;
* The proposed testing (including stability testing) and quality regime during the product development stage.

**Bidding & Evaluation phase**

* Providing support in answering clarification questions from suppliers in respect of the framework agreements tendering process.
* Provide input into the assessment and evaluation of bids received in respect of proposals to manufacture and supply the women’s and children’s vitamin products.
* The manufacturers’ proposed testing and quality regime during the period in which the product is available to the public.

**Implementation phase**

* Provide advice to the NHSBSA during the implementation phase of the framework agreements on the findings of testing of new products during the implementation phase.
* Attend site visits (if conducted as part of the evaluation exercise) and provide advice and approval of the site for use in live manufacture.
* Conduct an audit of the required governance for the manufacture and supply of the women’s and children’s vitamins.
* Approval of the manufacturers testing reports, to ensure the products are safe to move into live production.

**Delivery of the framework agreements**

* Provide support to develop suitable performance indicators in relation to manufacturing and quality processes, which will allow the NHSBSA to manage the framework agreements effectively.
* The possibility of providing further advice to the team on quality issues during the delivery phase of the framework agreements.

**Evaluation**

The NHSBSA is looking to appoint a subject matter expert who can demonstrate:

* relevant experience of the formulation of food supplements, including performing quality and safety functions as required under food supplement legislation,
* relevant experience of Food Regulations.

Applicants should also note that, if they are successful, they will be required to sign an undertaking preventing them from offering services to any company, in respect of a bid which that company may wish to make for the manufacture of Healthy Start Vitamins

***Description of the Procurement***

At this stage we are seeking high-level input to enable us to assess the market and to inform any future procurement strategy for a Healthy Start Vitamins Subject Matter Expert to ensure compliance with The Procurement Act 2023 and/or the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as the case may be.

Interested parties must register an interest in this RFI via <https://health-family.force.com/s/Welcome> (search opportunities using system reference C365203). Suppliers can register from 30th June 2025 and the RFI documents will be made available by 10th July 2025. Registration for the event will close on 15th July 2025 at 13:00 BST.

As part of our pre-tender market engagement process for the award of a contract for a Subject Matter Expert, registered suppliers are invited to attend a Supplier Briefing Session which will consist of a presentation via Microsoft Teams which will be held on 16th July 2025. Suppliers may also request an optional 1-2-1 session on 17th July 2025. Written RFI responses are requested by no later than 31st July 2025.

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) invites all interested economic operators to participate in an RFI and a Supplier Webinar, followed by a number of 121 sessions in addition to a number of questions following the presentation.

Please note at this stage a route to market has not yet been determined however should the outcome of this engagement session determine that the best value route to market is via a Framework Agreement then any subsequent invitation to tender and notices will be restricted to those appointed to the framework agreement and may be governed by the Procurement Regulations 2015.

**Additional Information**

Suppliers should note that this RFI and Preliminary Market Engagement is a market research exercise only and it is not an invitation to tender, an invitation to offer an agreement or a guarantee there will be a future procurement exercise.

Participation in this RFI is limited to suppliers that meet the definition of “economic operator” under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. “Economic operator” means any person, or public entity, or group of such persons and entities, including any temporary association of undertakings, that offers the execution of works or a work, the supply of products or the provision of services on the market. Where a participant does not meet this criteria, they will not be able to attend the Supplier Briefing Session and may therefore be removed from the RFI

The Supplier Webinar will start with an Open Forum Presentation that will be delivered by key members of the Project Team. Individual supplier 1-2-1 sessions will take the format of questions and answers with suppliers being able to ask any questions relating to the NHSBSA’s requirements, the previously delivered presentation and the potential procurement process.

**Disclaimers:**

 **(1) No competitive advantage will be gained by the suppliers engaging with the NHSBSA at this early stage and NHSBSA will ensure equal treatment of all interested parties at all times. We will make the outputs of the day available to those Suppliers who are unable to attend.**

**(2) NHSBSA does not bind itself, by conducting this Supplier Webinar exercise, to commence any procurement procedure or award any contract, and will not in any event be responsible for any costs incurred by invitees in attending and/or preparing for the presentation and individual supplier meeting referred to above.**

**(3) Confidentiality of information which is clearly marked or identified as being confidential and which is reasonably viewed by NHSBSA as confidential will be observed, but NHSBSA does not accept any blanket claims of confidentiality.**