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| ***Evidence Specification Reference*** |
| FS102100 |
| ***Evidence Specification Title*** |
| Benchmark standards for a world-recognised food national surveillance system |
| **Contract Duration** |
| August 2014 – January 2015 |

This evidence 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
3. **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 electronic public procurement system, ePPS, using the following link: <https://fsa-esourcing.eurodyn.com/epps/home.do>. Please refer to the document ‘*Guidance for the* *completion of on-line tenders for science and evidence gathering projects using the Food Standards Agency electronic public procurement system, ePPS’* before completing the application.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 a non-ministerial government department governed by a Board appointed to act in the public interest, with the task of protecting consumers in relation to food. It is a UK-wide body with offices in London, Aberdeen, Cardiff, Belfast and York.

The Agency is committed to openness and transparency. As well as the final project report being published on our open access repository Foodbase, we encourage contractors to publish their work in peer reviewed scientific publications wherever possible. Also, in line with the Government’s Transparency Agenda which aims to encourage more open access to data held by government, the Agency is developing a policy on the release of underpinning data from all of its science- and evidence-gathering projects. Underpinning data should also 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. The Agency has established the key principles for release of underpinning data that will be applied to all new science- and evidence-gathering projects which we would expect contractors to comply with. These can be found at <http://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/data-and-policies/underpinning-data>

The Food Standards Agency in Scotland supports a programme of research and surveillance to inform its future policy decisions. This programme ensures that specific Scottish issues are properly addressed and that the Agency’s UK-wide research and surveillance programme takes full account of Scottish concerns. The Scottish research portfolio is clearly and transparently linked to the aims and objectives set out in the Agency Strategy to 2015 and the Science and Evidence Strategy.

This project aims to identify two countries that are internationally recognised as having particularly effective surveillance systems, and identify the components that contribute to that effectiveness. It supports the FSA Strategy to 2015 as follows:-

* Increase horizon scanning and improve forensic knowledge of, and intelligence on, global food chains to identify and minimise the impact of potential and re-emerging risks
* Use our knowledge of what works in driving up business compliance,
* Help compliant businesses to thrive by focusing intervention on non-compliant businesses, ensuring the non-compliant do not benefit at the expense of the compliant

**A. THE SPECIFICATION**

**Background**

In response to the Horsemeat incident in 2013, Scottish Ministers established an Expert Advisory Group chaired by Professor Jim Scudamore[[1]](#footnote-1). The report of the Expert Advisory Group recommended, among other things, that the New Food Body for Scotland should consider how to improve the use and collation of information across food standards and food safety to ensure Scotland has a world recognised surveillance system in place.

The purpose of this project is to identify two countries that are internationally recognised as having particularly effective surveillance systems, and identify the components that contribute to that effectiveness.

**The Specification**

Tenders are invited to identify two countries whose food surveillance systems are internationally recognised as particularly effective and the key components of the systems that contribute to their effectiveness. In addition, they should identify the extent to which the current arrangements in Scotland (and UK), and any currently planned improvements, reflect the key components identified in the comparator countries as crucial to their effective performance.

The intended approach shall be based on a literature review with follow up if necessary through correspondence or other communication with academics or relevant government bodies in the countries identified for benchmarking.

Contractors will be given details of contacts within FSA who may be able to suggest lines of enquiry into possible candidate countries, based on experience. Contractors should use any relevant information provided by FSA officials where practicable or should otherwise provide details of the reasons why these were not considered further at the interim FSA meeting. The contractors shall present FSA with details of at least two recommended candidate countries, together with documentary evidence supporting their recommendations, at the interim meeting at the end of September 2014. The contractors may bring evidence of other potential candidates to that meeting. The FSA will agree the candidate countries within 3 working days of the meeting.

The contractors will then identify the key components of the two national surveillance systems agreed for comparison and the contribution that each component makes to the effectiveness of the national system; and the extent to which the current arrangements in Scotland (and UK) and any currently planned improvements reflect the key components identified in the two comparator countries. In addition, this should include analysis on the extent to which any key features not currently reflected in Scotland/UK could be applied.

The research should deliver a report that is sufficient for use by the FSA and the new food body for Scotland to develop improvements and demonstrate comparability of arrangements with the comparator countries.

The scope of *surveillance* in this context is broad and would need to cover food standards, authenticity and safety as well as the detection of food fraud.  The scope of surveillance mechanisms should extend beyond sampling and include relevant information gathered through delivery of Official Controls and all other relevant sources of information and intelligence that are utilised.

The Scudamore report provided a clear definition for *surveillance*: “the on-going systematic collection, collation, analysis and interpretation of accurate information about a defined food or feed with respect to food safety or food standards closely integrated with timely dissemination of that information to those responsible for control and prevention measures”

This is a qualitative assessment based on available evidence which may include expert opinion.

The draft report shall be made available by 1 December 2014 with the final report by 30 January 2015

The draft report shall set out:

* The methodology and sources of evidence.
* The key characteristics of the surveillance arrangements in each agreed comparator country
* The extent to which arrangements in Scotland compare with each of the comparator country including specifically any missing elements or other shortfalls.

The final report of research findings shall include:

* A stand-alone summary
* Raw data (anonymised where necessary) - in MS Word or Excel format as appropriate.
* Details of respondents who agree to be re contacted for further research.

Applications should be submitted as a single tender on ePPS covering all the requirements outlined above.

1. **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.

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| **TABLE 1. ESTIMATED PROJECT TIMETABLE** | |
| **EXPECTED DATE** | **INVITATION TO (ITT) TENDER** |
| 2 June | Invitation to Tender (ITT) issued by the Agency |
| 2 June | ITT Clarification period opens\* |
| 7 July | ITT Clarification period closes\*\* |
| 14 July | Closing date for submission of ITT responses\*\*\* |
| 18 July | Evaluation of ITT responses |
| 1 August | Tenderers contacted with points raised by appraisers for clarification on their tender, with 2 weeks to respond |
| 11 August | Appraisal panel meeting held to consider clarified ITT responses |
| 15 August | Tenderers notified of outcome of appraisal and preferred Tenderer (or Tenderers) identified |
| 22 August | Clarification meeting with the preferred Tenderer(s). Agreement of Final Specification; Project Plan; Price and Contract Terms |
| 29 August | Contract awarded and signed |
| 29 August | Project commences |
| 30 January | Latest date for submission of final report to FSA |

\* 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 ePPS system by the date specified.

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

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

**Further Information**

For any technical queries, points of clarification regarding this specification, queries regarding the use of the ePPS system or the procurement procedures please submit through the clarification tab in the electronic Public Procurement System (ePPS).

**Closing Date**

Tenders should be submitted on the ePPS system **by 12.00 noon on 14 July 2014.**

**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 and quoting a reference number. In addition you will receive an automatic email from ePPS with a reference number.

# 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

# Financial 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:

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| **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 | 10% |
| 1. The scientific approach/scope of work | 20% |
| 1. The plan and deliverables | 10% |
| 1. Organisational experience, expertise and staff effort | 15% |
| 1. Project management | 10% |
| 1. Risk management | 5% |
| 1. Quality management | 10% |
| FINANCIAL 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:

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| 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 |

## The Financial Envelope

The Financial 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 Financial 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 financial envelope**

Please complete the Finance 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 financial envelope**

**Financial criteria will be evaluated as follows:**

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| SCORE | DESCRIPTION FOR SCORE OF THE CRITERIA |
| 100 | There is full justification for the levels of staffing 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 levels of staffing 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 |

1. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00426914.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)