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Award

Extension of agreement for the management of an informatics platform which allows access to UK Biobank data

UK BIOBANK LIMITED

F15: Voluntary ex ante transparency notice

Notice identifier: 2026/S 000-000312

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-05ff59

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Section I: Contracting authority/entity

I.1) Name and addresses

UK BIOBANK LIMITED

Units 1 & 2 Spectrum Way

Stockport

SK30SA

Email

tenders@ukbiobank.ac.uk

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKD3 - Greater Manchester

Companies House

4978912

Internet address(es)

Main address

www.ukbiobank.ac.uk

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

Health

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Extension of agreement for the management of an informatics platform which allows access to UK Biobank data

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 72500000 - Computer-related services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

UK Biobank ("UKB") intends to extend its current contract with DNAnexus for the ongoing management and support of the Research Analysis Platform for a period of two years to allow UKB to conduct i) a procurement exercise in relation to the development of an Output Checking System (formerly described as automated airlock software), ii) preliminary market engagement and a procurement exercise for the provision of cloud infrastructure services to securely store and handle the UKB data once a new cloud-based Research Analysis Platform is established and iii) preliminary market engagement

and a procurement exercise for the development of that new Research Analysis Platform.

The extension of the current Research Analysis Platform contract has not been the subject of a competitive procurement pursuant to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as amended or otherwise, for the reasons set out in Section II.2.4 below.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.1.7) Total value of the procurement (excluding VAT)

Value excluding VAT: £4,800,000

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 30211300 - Computer platforms
- 48100000 - Industry specific software package
- 72300000 - Data services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

UKB currently hosts a cloud-based Research Analysis Platform which makes UKB data accessible to registered researchers within designated areas of the Research Analysis Platform, such that they can conduct their approved research project. The current Research Analysis Platform was procured by UKB in 2020. It was developed by DNAnexus, in collaboration with, and cloud infrastructure provided by, Amazon Web Services. At the end of Q2 2024 UKB adopted a Research Analysis Platform by default approach (with very limited exemptions), such that all UKB researchers were obliged to conduct their research on the Research Analysis Platform. The rationale behind this change is that the health record linkage data - both secondary and in due course primary - is now only permissible through a cloud-based environment (within the EEA). This significantly raised the level of adoption and usage of the Research Analysis Platform and required substantive improvements in functionality and scale to the Research Analysis Platform. As a consequence, the volume of researchers accessing the Research Analysis Platform has increased very significantly since it was first launched by UKB, with the

number of researchers accessing data via the platform increasing from less than 50 in February 2021 to circa 16,500 in 2025.

UKB intends to extend its current contract with DNAnexus for the ongoing management and support of the Research Analysis Platform for a period of two years to allow UKB to progress discrete but linked competitive procurement exercises in relation to the implementation of a secure data environment strategy which encompasses:

(i) the development of an Output Checking System (OCS) to improve the functionality and security of the UKB data and to facilitate the necessary certification by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and National Health Service (NHS) for the purposes of facilitating access to linked health record data and in particular the provision of the future primary care data;

(ii) the provision of cloud infrastructure for the storage and handling of growing volumes of UKB data and support proposed enhancements to the new Research Analysis Platform (see below); and

(iii) the development of a new Research Analysis Platform to provide a stable platform for research activities taking account of technology advancements over the past 5/6 years and incorporate new datasets to be accessed by researchers and make improvements to meta data storage and researcher tools.

On 23 April 2025, UKB issued Preliminary Market Engagement Notices in respect of the proposed procurements for the Output Checking System, cloud infrastructure and the new Research Analysis Platform. These Preliminary Market Engagement Notices were updated on 10 December 2025. These noted the inter-related nature of the three procurements and the intention to carry out the procurements for the Output Checking System and cloud infrastructure in advance of (and in order to inform) the procurement for the development of the new cloud infrastructure and Research Analysis Platform. As such, UKB intends to conduct the procurement of the Output Checking System first, in the first half of 2026, followed (in the second half of 2026 or early 2027) by the procurement of cloud infrastructure services that will apply once the new Research Analysis Platform is in operation and finally the conduct of the procurement for the new Research Analysis Platform in 2027. UKB intends to undertake preliminary market engagement in relation to the cloud infrastructure (to understand how storage capacity and compute optimisation can enhance the functionality and security of UKB's data) and in relation to the new Research Analysis Platform (to understand the needs of its researchers and the solutions which may be available on the market) before launch of the respective procurement exercises. This strategy and sequencing of the procurement exercises will facilitate a smooth transition - for UKB's many thousands of researchers - to an enhanced secure environment for the access and use of the critical UKB data and research projects.

The need for the Output Checking System was only made explicit in 2024 when the

DHSC and NHS communicated the need for UKB to have certification in order to continue to receive and make available linked health record data and to be able to incorporate primary care data into UKB datasets. It is necessary and appropriate for the procurement exercises for both the Output Checking System and for the cloud infrastructure which will host the data once the new platform is established to be completed before preliminary market engagement can take place with suppliers and users regarding the requirements and strategic approach to the new Research Analysis Platform. The Output Checking System and cloud infrastructure procurement exercises need to be completed before the competitive procurement exercise for the development of the new platform, on the basis that the outputs and associated infrastructure will inform the technology solution for the new platform. The Output Checking System will be delivered first to meet both UKB and government need to increase the security of data and subsequently allow for new datasets to be accessed securely by researchers. The delivery of the OCS will also allow UKB to further develop data storage and usage requirements that will inform the cloud infrastructure procurement as well as the future Research Analysis Platform. In light of the above, to facilitate the procurement of the new platform and ensure an orderly transition to that new platform, an extension to the current contract with DNAnexus is required. There is no practical prospect of another contractor operating the current Research Analysis Platform due to the proprietary DNAnexus intellectual property rights in the platform software and UKB's licence to such rights only being available during the life of the DNAnexus contract.

UKB considers that the extension to the contract is permitted without a new procurement procedure in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR) as amended, on the basis that the extension is not substantial within the meaning of regulation 72(1)(e) and (8) of the PCR. UKB considers that the extension:

- does not render the contract materially different in character;
- would not have impacted the suppliers interested in, or the outcome of, the previous procurement of the current managed Research Analysis Platform;
- does not change the economic balance of the contract in favour of DNAnexus; and
- does not extend the scope of the contract (which is for services of a kind already provided for in the contract) considerably, albeit that the number of researchers accessing UKB data via the current platform is significantly greater than envisaged in 2020.

It is appropriate for the various procurement exercises to be undertaken in sequence. UKB needs to develop a secure approach to researchers being able to securely egress data from the current Research Analysis Platform. The Output Checking System procurement therefore needs to be completed as a priority, in order to secure the approval of the DHSC and NHS to researchers accessing linked health record data and, in the future, primary care data. The procurement for cloud infrastructure should be completed

before the initiation of the procurement of the new Research Analysis Platform, as the technology of the Output Checking System and selected cloud solution, as well as data storage and compute requirements, will impact the technology underlying the new platform which will be hosted and accessed via the cloud. In any event, even if the extension to the current contract with DNAnexus were not permitted within Regulation 72 of the PCR, for the reasons set out above UKB considers that the award of a further contract to support and manage the current Research Analysis Platform without prior publication of a tender notice would be permitted under section 41 and paragraphs 5 and/or 6 and/or 7 of Schedule 5 to the Procurement Act 2023. In particular:-

(i) only DNAnexus can provide the services on the current platform until the completion of a new competitive procurement exercise for the provision of a new platform because DNAnexus and its licensors retain the proprietary intellectual property rights in the platform software and UKB's licence to such rights come to an end when the current contract with DNAnexus ends, such that there is no reasonable alternatives to DNAnexus continuing to provide those services; and/or

(ii) the extension concerns the supply of the same services by DNAnexus and a change to another contractor - bearing in mind there are many thousands of registered researchers with over 4000 active research projects - would result in disproportionate technical difficulties in operation or maintenance of the current platform.

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

II.2.14) Additional information

Section V indicates that a contract has been awarded. However, for the avoidance of doubt, this notice (and the estimated value) relates to a proposed extension to the existing contract.

The date at Section V.2.1) is the date of issue of this notice, UK Biobank's anticipated date of entering into the extension agreement with DNAnexus is 19th January 2026.

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Award of a contract without prior publication of a call for competition in the cases listed below

- The procurement falls outside the scope of application of the regulations

Explanation:

The current contract was the subject of a competitive procurement and was originally awarded to DNAnexus in 2020. The extension to the contract is permitted by Regulation 72 of PCR and in any event the direct award of a new contract for the ongoing management of the current platform until June 2028 would be permitted under section 41 and paragraphs 5 and/or 6 and/or 7 of Schedule 5 to the Procurement Act 2023.

As highlighted in Section II.2.4, UKB considers that the extension of the agreement to support and manage the current Research Analysis Platform is permitted under regulation 72(1)(e) and 72(8) of the PCR. The extension to the current contract with DNAnexus is for a period of two years until the proposed competitive procurement exercises in relation to the Output Checking System, the provision of cloud infrastructure services to support the new managed platform and the development and operation of the new platform have been completed. The position of DHSC and NHS in relation to the secure egress of data from the Research Analysis Platform could not have been foreseen until 2024. The sequencing of the procurement for the development of the Output Checking System and cloud infrastructure services logically precede the procurement of the new platform, as the choice of the new platform(s) will be dependent on the cloud technology which will host the data and take account of the Output Checking System. Clarity regarding these technical solutions is necessary to ensure certainty and transparency of requirements in relation to the platform to take account of new technologies and an orderly transition to a new secure data environment whereby the researchers can access wider subsets of UKB data.

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

Section V. Award of contract/concession

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract/concession

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

5 January 2026

V.2.2) Information about tenders

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor/concessionaire

DNAexus Inc.

1975 West El Camino Real Suite 204 California

Mountain View

CA 94040

Country

United States

NUTS code

- US - United States

Justification for not providing organisation identifier

Not on any register

The contractor/concessionaire is an SME

No

V.2.4) Information on value of contract/lot/concession (excluding VAT)

Total value of the contract/lot/concession: £4,800,000

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

High Court

Royal Courts of Justice

London

WC2A 2LL

Country

United Kingdom