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Tender

Technical Preparedness Study - Hydrogen Blends in the Northern Ireland Gas Distribution Networks

Firmus Energy (Distribution) Limited

F05: Contract notice – utilities

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-006527

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04e5d9

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Section I: Contracting entity

I.1) Name and addresses

Firmus Energy (Distribution) Limited

A4-A5 Fergusons Way Kilbegs Road

ANTRIM

BT414LZ

Contact

Lisa McCarthy

Email

procurement@firmusenergynetworks.co.uk

Telephone

+44 2894427890

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKN0D - Antrim and Newtownabbey

Companies House

05375370

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.firmusenergy.co.uk/>

I.3) Communication

Access to the procurement documents is restricted. Further information can be obtained at

<https://www.firmusenergy.co.uk/publications/category/tender-opportunities>

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted electronically via

<https://www.firmusenergy.co.uk/publications/category/tender-opportunities>

I.6) Main activity

Production, transport and distribution of gas and heat

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Technical Preparedness Study - Hydrogen Blends in the Northern Ireland Gas Distribution Networks

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 73110000 - Research services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

The Northern Ireland Gas Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) (i.e. firmus energy (Distribution) Limited (firmus energy networks), Phoenix Energy Group Limited and SGN Evolve Network Limited), along with Transmission System Operators - Mutual Energy and Gas Networks Ireland (UK) - have established a pathway to decarbonise the NI Gas Network by 2050. To support this pathway, we have developed an extensive programme of research projects to support our preparations to accommodate large volumes of renewable gas.

The objective of this project is to establish the readiness of NI's gas distribution networks to accept hydrogen and natural gas blends including assessment of pressure reduction stations, primary meter installations and the impacts on larger end user downstream systems. The project will aim at the outset, to maximise the draw down of relevant evidence and data from publicly available hydrogen related trials, testing and research work and other industry sources thus enabling focus to be placed on identifying and addressing gaps in data, equipment performance verification and materials testing that are specific to the NI gas distribution networks.

The NI DNOs are therefore seeking a qualified and suitably experienced consultant to establish the technical and safety readiness of the NI distribution networks and end user downstream systems to accept hydrogen.

Whilst the immediate priority is to identify the limits of existing gas infrastructure and end user downstream systems for hydrogen blends of up to 20% by volume, this project work shall not preclude consideration of 100% hydrogen where this can be practically, and cost effectively covered in assessments and investigative works.

The final outcome of this project is expected to be a detailed and comprehensive report on the current hydrogen ready status of NI gas networks and metering assets that identifies and quantifies safety risks and mitigations, with a prioritised and cost estimated roadmap outlining the requirements for network modification or replacement, recommended areas of further testing/research work and associated expenditure, as necessary, to safely facilitate injected hydrogen.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKN - Northern Ireland

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This tender process is being led by firmus energy networks, using the open procedure in accordance with Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 (as amended), for the benefit of itself, Phoenix Energy Group Limited and SGN Evolve Network Limited (the NI DNOs). firmus energy networks is seeking to enter into a Contract with a Service Provider to conduct a technical preparedness study for the benefit of the NI DNOs.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Price is not the only award criterion and all criteria are stated only in the procurement documents

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

Start date

1 August 2025

This contract is subject to renewal

No

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

Section III. Legal, economic, financial and technical information

III.1) Conditions for participation

III.1.1) Suitability to pursue the professional activity, including requirements relating to enrolment on professional or trade registers

List and brief description of conditions

As stated in the procurement documents.

III.1.2) Economic and financial standing

Selection criteria as stated in the procurement documents

III.1.3) Technical and professional ability

Selection criteria as stated in the procurement documents

III.1.4) Objective rules and criteria for participation

List and brief description of rules and criteria

As stated in the procurement documents.

III.1.8) Legal form to be taken by the group of economic operators to whom the contract is to be awarded

In the event of a Consortium submitting an acceptable offer, the Contract will be entered into between firmus energy networks and the lead single member who will act as the agreed prime contractor. The prime contractor will be responsible for delivery of all Services under the Contract. The prime contractor is responsible for ensuring that all parties to the Consortium comply with the terms of the ITT and the Contract, if successful. firmus energy networks will not act as an arbitrator between members of a Consortium. Without prejudice to the foregoing however, firmus energy networks also reserves the right, should it deem it necessary or more appropriate, to contract with each member of the group on the basis of joint and several liability or to contract with one member of the group as prime contractor, to whom the other members will be sub-contractors.

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Open procedure

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

IV.2) Administrative information

IV.2.2) Time limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate

Date

18 April 2025

Local time

5:00pm

IV.2.4) Languages in which tenders or requests to participate may be submitted

English

IV.2.6) Minimum time frame during which the tenderer must maintain the tender

Duration in months: 3 (from the date stated for receipt of tender)

IV.2.7) Conditions for opening of tenders

Date

18 April 2025

Local time

6:00pm

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.1) Information about recurrence

This is a recurrent procurement: No

VI.3) Additional information

Tenderers that wish to participate in this procurement are required to provide their contact details to procurement@firmusenergynetworks.co.uk on downloading the procurement documents from the website at Section I.3 above. Tenderers who fail to provide their details or register in this manner will not receive any clarifications or updated information provided by firmus energy networks during the procurement process. Once your details have been received, firmus energy networks will provide the password for the procurement documents.

Tenderers should note that the contract start date provided at Section II.2.7 above is an estimate only. The duration of the contract will run for the period of the research study.

The costs of responding to this notice and participation in the process will be borne by each Tenderer. All discussions and correspondence will be deemed strictly subject to contract until a formal contract is entered into. The formal contract shall not be binding until it has been signed and dated by the duly authorised representatives of the relevant parties.

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland

Royal

Belfast

BT1 3JY

Email

office@courtsni.gov.uk

Country

United Kingdom