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Award

Specialist Science and Contingency Services - Food Contingency Laboratory

Food Standards Agency

F15: Voluntary ex ante transparency notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-009941

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04ee8b

Published 18 March 2025, 3:11pm

Section I: Contracting authority/entity

I.1) Name and addresses

Food Standards Agency

Floors 6 and 7, Clive House, 70 Petty France

London

SW1H9EX

Contact

Mark Croft

Email

FSA.Commercial@food.gov.uk

Telephone

+44 1904232228-22228

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UK - United Kingdom

Justification for not providing organisation identifier

Not on any register

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.food.gov.uk/>

Buyer's address

<https://www.food.gov.uk/>

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

National or federal Agency/Office

I.5) Main activity

General public services

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Specialist Science and Contingency Services - Food Contingency Laboratory

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 73000000 - Research and development services and related consultancy services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

This notice is for information only and is not a call for competition. FSA would like to notify the intention to directly award a service contract for Food Contingency Laboratory Services as part of the Specialist Science and Contingency Services Agreement tendered by Defra. We have identified no alternative provider following extensive market engagement who have the capability and capacity to deliver the service.

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: £3,589,260.45

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 73111000 - Research laboratory services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

The existing Long Term Service Agreement under which these services are provided will expire on 31 March 2025. Defra as the commercial lead, sought a replacement commercial arrangement to provide critical scientific evidence and contingency services to support its policy making and operational responsibilities including emergency response capabilities in relation to the food and the environment. The overarching contract is also used by other Government Departments, including Food Standards Agency. This contract specifically covers FSA and Defra's food contingency requirements. The supplier has the ability to deliver reliable, high quality scientific services competitively; well-proven transition and transformational capabilities within challenging timeframes; and possesses a vision and commitment to enhance relevant scientific capability into the future. The seamless continuation of services is essential to maintain the governments food incident response capability.

The contract is awarded for an initial five years and has an option to extend for an additional five years (+2+1+1+1).

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Negotiated without a prior call for competition

- The works, supplies or services can be provided only by a particular economic operator for the following reason:

- absence of competition for technical reasons

Explanation:

Defra intends to direct award a contract using the negotiated procedure without prior publication, in accordance with Regulation 32(2){b}{ii} (competition absent for technical reasons) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

The current contract will expire on 31 March 2025 and this contract must be made to ensure critical statutory specialist science and contingency services continue to be provided. This contract will be awarded to Fera Science Limited for the provision of specialist science and contingency services.

To inform its decision-making, Detra has undertaken three rounds of market engagement with interested suppliers. Before each round, it has published a prior information notice (PIN), ensuring that all interested suppliers are aware of the re-procurement and have had the opportunity to express interest and provide evidence of their capacity and capabilities to perform all or part of the services. Three elements of the specification were identified:

- (a) those aspects where there is no competition, eg, those parts of the specification that relate to the required specialist facilities for this contract;
- {b) those parts where there may be genuine competition.
- (c) those parts where competitors have expressed an interest in supplying all or part of the requirement, but have not provided sufficient information when requested to establish that they have, or could develop in the time available, the necessary capacity or capability.

In relation to {b) there are some services for Government Departments, FSA, HSE, Welsh Government and DAERA where reasonable alternatives in the market were identified, as such, those services have been disaggregated and those respective Departments will identify a route to market outside of this contract. Some research and development requirements that are not related to (a), will be procured through Detra's existing RDE Framework or such other route to market. As such these services no longer form part of the specification for this contract.

In relation to (a) and (c), the market engagement has identified that currently there is no candidate who is able to deliver the requirements of the specification and competition is absent for technical reasons.

As such this contract will be awarded by direct award in accordance with Regulation 32(2){b}(ii).

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

17 March 2025

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

Fera

York

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UK - United Kingdom

Companies House

09413107

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: £3,589,260.45

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

Public Procurement Review Body

Public Procurement Review Body

N/A

N/A

Email

publicprocurementreview@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Telephone

+44 3450103503

Country

United Kingdom

VI.4.2) Body responsible for mediation procedures

High Court Royal Courts of Justice

London

WC2A 2LL

Country

United Kingdom