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Tender

## **Digital Support Services for the Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate**

Scottish Government

F02: Contract notice

Notice identifier: 2024/S 000-010511

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-03c7b4

Published 2 April 2024, 10:10am

The closing date and time has been changed to:

**8 May 2024, 12:00pm**

See the [change notice](#).

### **Section I: Contracting authority**

#### **I.1) Name and addresses**

Scottish Government

Area 3A South, Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

#### **Email**

[Angus.Mackenzie2@gov.scot](mailto:Angus.Mackenzie2@gov.scot)

#### **Telephone**

+44 1412240990

## **Country**

United Kingdom

## **NUTS code**

UKM - Scotland

## **Internet address(es)**

Main address

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>

Buyer's address

[https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/search/Search\\_AuthProfile.aspx?ID=AA10482](https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/search/Search_AuthProfile.aspx?ID=AA10482)

## **I.3) Communication**

The procurement documents are available for unrestricted and full direct access, free of charge, at

<https://www.publictendersscotland.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk>

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted electronically via

<https://www.publictendersscotland.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk>

## **I.4) Type of the contracting authority**

Ministry or any other national or federal authority

## **I.5) Main activity**

General public services

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## **Section II: Object**

### **II.1) Scope of the procurement**

#### **II.1.1) Title**

Digital Support Services for the Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate

#### **II.1.2) Main CPV code**

- 72267100 - Maintenance of information technology software

#### **II.1.3) Type of contract**

Services

#### **II.1.4) Short description**

The primary requirement is to put in place a contract for a Service Provider to work in partnership, primarily with the Purchaser, to ensure that reliable, secure and up to date services continue to be delivered. The Service Provider will support existing services as well as any new services that come into the production environment during the life of this contract. The contract will focus on the support, maintenance, upgrading and enhancement of current services. Any major new service designs and developments are likely to be subject to separate contractual arrangements, but this contract will have scope for some new development work should that be the practical and cost-effective approach.

This contract must allow flexibility for the Purchaser to access the right resources, with the right skills, at the right time. The intention at the outset is the Service Provider will be required to provide scalable access to resources by supplementing in-house staff and other specialist services predominantly in blended teams to ensure efficient and effective system maintenance, support, enhancement and modernisation activities. Work will be led by the Purchaser joined by Service Provider staff working in blended teams.

The Purchaser has found that working in blended teams in recent years has been successful and wishes to retain this practice as its underpinning model and continue to drive flexibility and efficiencies in its ways of working. The Service Provider will likely be required to deliver some end-to-end projects during the life of the contract, working to Scottish Government agreed standards and practices. The Service Provider will be required to provide resources and services that have the capability, flexibility and responsiveness required. The ability to scale up, scale down and potentially swap out based on emerging requirements and technology is vital.

## **II.1.5) Estimated total value**

Value excluding VAT: £95,000,000

## **II.1.6) Information about lots**

This contract is divided into lots: No

## **II.2) Description**

### **II.2.3) Place of performance**

NUTS codes

- UKM - Scotland

Main site or place of performance

Saughton House, Edinburgh, Broomhouse Dr, Edinburgh EH11 3XD.

### **II.2.4) Description of the procurement**

The Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate (ARE) within Scottish Government is responsible for supporting Scotland's sustainable economic growth in agriculture, the food industry and in rural areas.

ARE delivers a broad range of essential payments and support services to rural customers across Scotland. There are a variety of schemes that benefit the rural sector both economically and environmentally. These are explained in significant detail on the Rural Payments and Services website. They are almost totally dependent on digital services and technologies to ensure that claims for subsidies, grants and support under several schemes are delivered in a timely, accurate and compliant way. This ensures farmers, crofters and land managers across Scotland receive the payments which they are entitled to and, overall, the Scottish Government fulfils its legal obligations and delivers its policy intentions.

The main Rural Payments and Services (RP&S) Digital Platform is highly complex due to the significant level of accuracy in land measurement and associated actions that it needs to work to. It was specifically designed to apply the EU CAP regulations, often in great detail, based on a technical architecture that was first defined in 2012. Other technologies and services that predate the main Platform still form a vital part of the overall solution, and there have been some newer services introduced that are based on the latest technologies and approaches available.

There is a triple imperative:

1. The Purchaser will be continuing to modernise and improve the complete technical architecture that underpins the services;
2. The Purchaser will be continuing to adapt the existing support schemes and introduce new ones that will deliver the desired outcomes for agriculture, the environment, biodiversity and the rural economy;
3. The Purchaser will be continuing to apply digital thinking and innovation to exploit technologies and provide customer-centred, reliable, secure and cost-effective services.

Change cannot be allowed to negatively impact the current business. Using the Rural Payments and Services (RP&S) Digital Platform and supporting Digital systems, Rural Payments and Inspections Division (RPID), from 18 offices throughout Scotland, processes payments of around 600 million GBP annually to customers, to the benefit of Scotland's rural communities and the rural economy. The platform processes 36,000 types of claims per year for about 20,000 customers (representing 46,000 registered businesses) and has well over 99% availability to customers 24/7, 365 days a year. RPID is now making payments quicker than ever before.

The primary focus of the Purchaser through this contract is the retiral, maintenance and enhancement of the current services, but also extending them and integrating them as appropriate in order to benefit from digital innovations. When new features are developed they will become "business as usual" and must be kept reliable and secure.

The Climate Change and Environment Emergency is front and centre of the Government's policy and ARE has a leading role in setting and delivering Climate Change related targets. ARE has published its Vision for Agriculture and Scotland's Agricultural Reform Route Map which together set out how Scotland as a leader in sustainable and regenerative farming will be delivered. The Agriculture Reform Programme has been established to implement change. It is vital that services are reliable, secure and fully maintained as these new policies and approaches are implemented. Prospective Service Providers need to be aware that the changes and new services that are introduced through the ARP need to be seamlessly transitioned into current live services during the course of the Programme through to 2027 and beyond.

## **II.2.5) Award criteria**

Quality criterion - Name: Quality / Weighting: 80

Price - Weighting: 20

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

Start date

28 March 2025

End date

29 September 2028

This contract is subject to renewal

Yes

Description of renewals

Option to extend the contract, at the Purchaser's discretion by 4 x 12 month periods

### **II.2.9) Information about the limits on the number of candidates to be invited**

Envisaged number of candidates: 5

Objective criteria for choosing the limited number of candidates:

Due to the character limits, not all objective criteria can be outlined in this notice. Full details

of the objective criteria are outlined in the SPD Guidance Document in PCS-T.

The SPD selection process will consist of 3 stages:

Stage One: Mandatory and Discretionary Exclusion Grounds (Pass/Fail);

Stage Two: Minimum Selection Criteria (Pass/Fail); and

Stage Three: Scored Selection Criteria (Weighted)

Only candidates who pass Stage One and Two will progress to Stage Three.

The top 5 candidates after the Stage 3 assessment will be taken through to stage 2 of the restricted procedure and invited to submit a tender.

In the event that more than the envisaged number of candidates achieve the scores required to be considered for stage 2, the candidate with the highest score in question B1 from the Technical and Professional Ability evaluation will be invited to stage 2. Should there be equal scores for this question the scores for the remaining questions will be reviewed in order B2, B3, B4, B5 until a highest score is identified.

#### **II.2.10) Information about variants**

Variants will be accepted: No

#### **II.2.11) Information about options**

Options: No

#### **II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds**

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

#### **II.2.14) Additional information**

Economic operators may be excluded from this competition if they are in any of the situations referred to in regulation 58 of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

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### **Section III. Legal, economic, financial and technical information**

### **III.1) Conditions for participation**

#### **III.1.2) Economic and financial standing**

List and brief description of selection criteria

The Economic and Financial Standing Assessment will be undertaken in two stages:

Stage One:

Economic operators will be required to confirm they have or commit to obtain the required levels of insurance cover specified below.

Economic operators will be required to provide their “general” annual turnover for the last 3 years.

Stage Two:

The Scottish Government will undertake a further financial assessment for each economic operator using Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) Failure Risk Score for the economic operator and any consortia or reliance members, as detailed in the minimum level(s) of standards required below.

Details of the D&B “A Guide to Dun & Bradstreet’s Predictive Indicators” – can be found using the http address below:

<https://www.dnb.co.uk/about-us/our-analytics/predictors-scores-ratings/scores-ratings.html>

There must be no qualification or contra-indication from any evidence provided in support of the economic operator’s economic and financial standing.

The Scottish Government reserves the right to request copies of financial accounts and insurance certificates which are not held electronically.

Minimum level(s) of standards possibly required

Stage One

Insurance Levels

Employers Liability Insurance in accordance with any legal requirement at the time being in force



Public Liability Insurance - 1 million GBP for any one incident and unlimited in total.

Professional Indemnity Insurance - 5 million GBP for any one incident and unlimited in total.

Cyber Liability Insurance - 1 million GBP

Average “General” Annual Turnover

Economic operators must have an average “general” annual turnover of 15 million GBP over the last 3 years.

Stage Two

Any other economic or financial requirements

There is no action required of Economic Operators at this stage.

Economic Operators must have a D&B 'Failure Score' of 51 or above.

If the Economic Operator (or any consortia or reliance partner) does not meet the financial requirements outlined above or if the D&B score is not available, we will contact the Economic Operator and seek further information. We will then use this further information to assess the Economic Operator’s level of financial risk. If this assessment identifies an unmanageable risk (i.e it is unacceptable) the Economic Operator will fail this assessment.

In the event that the Economic Operator does not meet the financial criteria for consideration but has a parent company that does, the Economic Operator may still be eligible for consideration where their submission is supported by a Parent Company Guarantee (provided that the Parent Company meets the minimum financial criteria). Where the Economic Operator does not have a Parent Company some other form of assurance such as a performance bond may be acceptable.

If the Economic Operator (or any consortia or reliance partner) does not pass the above assessment and is unable to provide a Parent Company Guarantee or some other form of assurance, this will result in a fail and the Economic Operator will be excluded.

### **III.1.3) Technical and professional ability**

List and brief description of selection criteria

4C1.2 Previous Experience

4C.4 Supply Chain Management

#### 4C.7 Environmental Management

#### 4C.10 Percentage of the contract you intend to sub-contract

Minimum level(s) of standards possibly required

#### 4C1.2 Previous Experience

Economic Operators will be required to provide examples that demonstrate that they have the relevant experience to deliver the services/supplies as described in part II.2.4 of the Find a Tender Service Contract Notice or the relevant section of the Site Notice. Economic Operators should refer to the SPD Guidance Document on PCS-T for further information.

#### 4C.4 Supply Chain Management

If Economic Operators intend to use a supply chain to deliver the requirements detailed in the Contract Notice, they should confirm they have (or have access to) the relevant supply chain management and tracking systems to ensure a resilient and sustainable supply chain. This will include confirmation that they have the systems in place to pay subcontractors through the supply chain promptly and effectively, and provide evidence when requested of:

a) their standard payment terms

b)  $\geq 95\%$  of all supply chain invoices being paid on time (in accordance with the terms of contract) in the last financial year.

If the Economic Operator is unable to confirm (b) they must provide an improvement plan, signed by their Director, which improves the payment performance.

#### 4C.7 Environmental Management

Economic Operators will be required to provide assurance that their organisation has taken steps to build their awareness of the climate change emergency and how they will respond. Accepted evidence includes:

- a completed copy of the Bidder 'relevant contract' Climate Change Plan Template, including planned projects and actions to reduce the bidder's carbon emissions.

#### 4C.10 Percentage of the contract you intend to sub-contract

Economic Operators will be required to confirm whether they intend to subcontract and, if so, for what proportion of the contract.

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## **Section IV. Procedure**

### **IV.1) Description**

#### **IV.1.1) Type of procedure**

Restricted 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.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure**

Notice number: [2023/S 000-013345](#)

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

Originally published as:

Date

3 May 2024

Local time

12:00pm

Changed to:

Date

8 May 2024

Local time

12:00pm

See the [change notice](#).

#### **IV.2.3) Estimated date of dispatch of invitations to tender or to participate to**

## **selected candidates**

30 August 2024

### **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: 6 (from the date stated for receipt of tender)

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## **Section VI. Complementary information**

### **VI.1) Information about recurrence**

This is a recurrent procurement: No

### **VI.3) Additional information**

Prior to submitting an SPD response, Economic Operators must review the draft Statement of Requirements and all other documents within the Information Pack and satisfy themselves that they are able to deliver the Services described therein.

We have set a maximum value of 95m GBP for the duration of this contract. This figure has been chosen to allow flexibility if ARE require more resource than currently anticipated over the potential seven-year contract. We anticipate spend to be in the region of 60-85m GBP.

The Purchaser does not guarantee volume commitment on the activities within this contract, and it is not a sole supply contract as the Purchaser has other partnering contracts. The Purchaser will consider on a case-by-case basis the most suitable contracting route for individual packages of work. The contract will mainly operate through a Statement of Work mechanism whereby the Purchaser and the Service Provider agree well in advance the capabilities and services required for a defined period ahead or for a specific piece of project-oriented work.

The buyer is using PCS-Tender to conduct this PQQ exercise. The Project code is 25994. For more information see:

<http://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/info/InfoCentre.aspx?ID=2343>

A sub-contract clause has been included in this contract. For more information see:  
<http://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/info/InfoCentre.aspx?ID=2363>

Community benefits are included in this requirement. For more information see:  
<https://www.gov.scot/policies/public-sector-procurement/community-benefits-in-procurement/>

A summary of the expected community benefits has been provided as follows:

As stated in the procurement documents

(SC Ref:750372)

## **VI.4) Procedures for review**

### **VI.4.1) Review body**

Edinburgh Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court

Edinburgh

EH1 1LB

Email

[edinburgh@scotcourts.gov.uk](mailto:edinburgh@scotcourts.gov.uk)

Telephone

+44 1312252525

Country

United Kingdom

Internet address

<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/court-locations/edinburgh-sheriff-court-and-justice-of-the-peace-court>