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Award

## **Contract for the Maintenance of BIFoR Systems to the University of Birmingham**

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

F15: Voluntary ex ante transparency notice

Notice identifier: 2021/S 000-011702

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-02b528

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### **Section I: Contracting authority/entity**

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

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Chancellors Court,Edgbaston

BIRMINGHAM

B152TT

#### **Contact**

Thomas Hasson

#### **Email**

[t.r.hasson@bham.ac.uk](mailto:t.r.hasson@bham.ac.uk)

#### **Country**

United Kingdom

#### **NUTS code**

UKG - West Midlands (England)

**Internet address(es)**

Main address

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/index.aspx>

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

Body governed by public law

**I.5) Main activity**

Education

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## **Section II: Object**

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

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

Contract for the Maintenance of BIFoR Systems to the University of Birmingham

Reference number

SC9188/21

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

- 42113390 - Fuel-gas systems

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

Supplies

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

The works consist of statutory and reactive maintenance of a liquid and gas CO<sub>2</sub> storage and distribution system owned by the University of Birmingham, over a period of five years.

#### **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: £172,710

### **II.2) Description**

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

NUTS codes

- UKG - West Midlands (England)

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

The Birmingham Institute of Forest Research's (BIFoR) Free Air Carbon dioxide Enrichment (FACE) experiment in Staffordshire, UK is designed to provide the scientific

community with a new understanding of how mature oak woodlands will respond to a future climate with higher levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere than exist at present. The experiment will expose large areas of woodland to elevated atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> at around 550 parts per million (ppm), which is the level we expect to reach by 2050.

The experiment consists of six arrays of towers within a woodland, each 30 m across, which extend from the ground to the top of the trees. CO<sub>2</sub> will be released within three of these rings, while the other three will act as control plots and receive ambient air only.

Carbon dioxide is stored in 3 x 40,000kg capacity Storage Vessels under pressure as a liquid. The liquid CO<sub>2</sub> is converted to a gas using ambient heat vaporisers and transported in pipes through the woodland to the experimental arrays. Here, it is diluted with normal air until the level reaches ~550 ppm before being released into the research space. Sensors within the array are used by a computer to automatically adjust the amount and direction of released CO<sub>2</sub> according to the speed and direction of the wind.

The University of Birmingham intends to award a contract for up to five years for the maintenance and calibration of the CO<sub>2</sub> storage and delivery system at the facility. The works consist of statutory and reactive maintenance and the entire system is owned and managed by the University of Birmingham. A scheme of works has been developed that covers maintenance, calibration and statutory compliance over a five year period.

Stardelta Power and Control are considered to be the preferred supplier after providing these services for the previous five year period. The FACE experimental set up is bespoke in nature and unusual in the industrial market as the University owns the infrastructure. The normal mode of operation is to rent/hire such gas storage and distribution systems. The owner of the gas storage and delivery infrastructure would then in turn manage the maintenance, calibration and statutory compliance requirements. These arrangements are normally internal. For this reason it previously proved very difficult to identify companies with the requisite skills and resources to tender for the University owned BIFoR FACE facility. The University has identified that for reasons of timescale and to achieve its aims within available staff capacity and alongside its core business activities, the products supplied by Stardelta Power and Control are the only ones capable of meeting the University's requirements and this is the only viable option for the University at this time.

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

Options: No

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## **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:

The University of Birmingham has made a considerable financial investment in procuring and installing the CO<sub>2</sub> storage and distribution system at the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research (BIFoR) Free Air Carbon Dioxide Enrichment (FACE) facility. The equipment installed is standard equipment used across the commercial CO<sub>2</sub> sector. However, the actual ownership of such equipment is unusual in the UK market especially for the industrial application of bulk gases by the user. The more common agreement is that the bulk gas supplier, in this case liquid CO<sub>2</sub>, also rents the storage vessels and distribution system to the client. The supplier then covers the maintenance, repairs and calibrations under the rental agreement. Due to the Universities unusual situation, very few companies with the requisite skills and technical capability are available to undertake such a contract as that on offer.

The University has an established relationship with Stardelta Power and Control who currently conduct the maintenance and calibration schedule of works while also providing a 24 hour repair service for ad hoc requirements. This supplier has proven to be reliable, efficient and cost effective. Further, Stardelta Power and Control are fully aware and respectful of the site requirements. The BIFoR FACE facility is situated within a woodland that is designed to mimic a non-intervention site and is considered pristine. It would be considered an unnecessary risk to introduce a new supplier at this stage of the experiment (half way through a decadal plan) to conduct heavy engineering works and invasive practices, especially considering the existing human resources available to supervise such activities.

The University has identified that for reasons of timescale and to achieve its aims within available staff capacity and alongside its core business activities, the products supplied by Stardelta Power and Control are the only ones capable of meeting the University's requirements and this is the only viable option for the University at this time.

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

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## **Section V. Award of contract/concession**

### **Contract No**

SC9188/21

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

### **V.2) Award of contract/concession**

#### **V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract**

19 May 2021

#### **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**

Stardelta Power & Control

Scandinavian Way, Stallingborough

Grimsby

DN41 8DT

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UKF - East Midlands (England)

The contractor/concessionaire is an SME

Yes

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

Total value of the contract/lot/concession: £172,710

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## **Section VI. Complementary information**

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

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

The University of Birmingham

Birmingham

B15 2TT

Country

United Kingdom