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Planning

Provision of Digital Support Services for Rural Payments and Support

Scottish Government

F01: Prior information notice

Prior information only

Notice identifier: 2023/S 000-013345

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

Published 10 May 2023, 3:18pm

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

Scottish Government

4 Atlantic Quay, 70 York St

Glasgow

G2 8EA

Email

Angus.Mackenzie2@gov.scot

Telephone

+44 1412420133

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

I.3) Communication

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Ministry or any other national or federal authority

I.5) Main activity

General public services

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Provision of Digital Support Services for Rural Payments and Support

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 of the procurement is to appoint a supplier to work in partnership and supplement in-house resources and other specialist services in blended teams to ensure efficient and effective system maintenance, support, modernisation and enhancement. There will be scope for completely new developments that will require to be integrated with existing services. Working in blended teams in recent years has been successful so ARE wishes to retain this practice and continue to drive flexibility and efficiencies in our ways of working. However, there may also be a requirement for the supplier to deliver end-to-end projects during the life of the contract, working to Scottish Government agreed standards and practices. Capability, flexibility and responsiveness are key in terms of the resources and services that are required. The ability to scale up, scale down and potentially swap out based on emerging requirements and technology is vital. Support will not only cover support for our existing services, but also the services that are under development during the lifetime of the contract.

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £92,000,000

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 Scottish Government's Directorate for Agriculture and the Rural Economy (ARE) promotes sustainable economic growth in agriculture, the food industry, and in rural areas.

In order to deliver the vision for Scotland as a leader in sustainable and regenerative farming ARE has published its Agricultural Reform Route Map. ARE has established a major Agriculture Reform Programme (ARP) to deliver the transformation via this Route Map, and digital enablement is at its heart.

ARE delivers a broad range of essential payments and support services to rural customers across Scotland. These are almost totally dependent on digital services and technologies to ensure that claims for payments and support under several schemes are delivered in a timely and accurate 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. It was specifically designed to apply the EU CAP regulations, often in great detail, based on a technical architecture that was defined in 2012. Other technologies and services that predate the main Platform are still 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. At the heart of the platform is a sophisticated Land Parcel Information System (LPIS) that manages over 700,000 land parcels within 4 million hectares of land. It spatially manages 1.7 million internal features down to the size of about half a tennis court. The platform has to maintain the history of land and other changes for at least seven and sometimes significantly longer (reflecting the timeframe of some of the schemes). This information is the basis for calculating a customer's entitlement to support payments and some grants.

There is a triple imperative:

To modernise the complete technical architecture that underpins the service;

To change the existing support schemes and introduce new ones that will deliver the desired outcomes for agriculture, the environment, biodiversity and the rural economy.

To apply digital thinking and innovation to exploit technologies to create new customer-centred services. Thus responding to the universal desire to have more readily available and useable data about Scotland's rural land use.

This has to be achieved without negatively impacting the current business. Using the payment platform Rural Payments and Inspections Division (RPID), from 18 offices throughout Scotland, processes payments of over 540 million GBP annually to customers, to the benefit of Scotland's rural communities and the rural economy. The platform processes 41,800 claims per year for about 20,000 customers and has well over 99% availability to customers 24/7, 365 days a year. RPID is now making payments quicker than ever before.

The changed 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. A robust regime is already in place that builds enhancement work into the Annual Business Cycle activity, as any changes made to RP&S requires extensive testing to ensure there is no adverse impact on the payments schedule or accuracy of payments.

The requirement is generally focused on the retiral, maintenance and enhancement of the current services, but also extending them to benefit from digital innovations. When new features are developed as part of the ARP or from other initiatives they will become "business as usual" and must be kept reliable and secure.

The below links are available in the "Further Information – Links" document in the Additional Documents area:

[Sustainable and Regenerative Farming - Next Steps](#)

[Agriculture Reform Route Map](#)

[Rural Payments & Services All Schemes](#)

II.2.14) Additional information

The Scottish Government plans to hold a Virtual Supplier Engagement Event on 30th May 2023 and any suppliers who are interested in the opportunity are invited to attend. Please refer to the "Registration Details" document available in the Additional Attachments area for information on how to register for the event.

II.3) Estimated date of publication of contract notice

31 August 2023

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.3) Additional information

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NOTE: To register your interest in this notice and obtain any additional information please visit the Public Contracts Scotland Web Site at

https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/Search/Search_Switch.aspx?ID=731528.

(SC Ref:731528)