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Contract

Communications Research Framework

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

F03: Contract award notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-015588

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04be43

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Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

Contact

Katie Thompson

Email

katie.thompson@defra.gov.uk

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UK - United Kingdom

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>

Buyer's address

<https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome>

I.2) Information about joint procurement

The contract is awarded by a central purchasing body

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Ministry or any other national or federal authority

I.5) Main activity

Environment

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Communications Research Framework

Reference number

C27070

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 79342000 - Marketing services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

This procurement will establish a framework to deliver research for Defra Group Communications Directorate.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: Yes

II.1.7) Total value of the procurement (excluding VAT)

Value excluding VAT: £1,500,000

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Stage 1 - Lot 1 - Qualitative Research

Lot No

Lot 1

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79310000 - Market research services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This Lot requires a supplier to utilise qualitative research approaches to inform our communications, often at pace. We need to be able to efficiently commission qualitative research to generate a deeper understanding of our audiences, including most appropriate channels, language and tone when communicating with them on specific Defra policies, announcements and campaigns. Qualitative research is also central to our ability to test messaging and visual assets with audiences to inform and improve communications strategies and targeting.

A central function of this Lot will be the delivery of quarterly focus groups. These groups will comprise of both regular, tracking insight and inform our communications response to emerging priorities or challenges, including narrative and message testing. Together with our quarterly public attitudes' tracker survey, this provides important, regular insight into public perceptions of our priority issues with value across the Communications Directorate. We anticipate that each wave will comprise of four, online focus groups with a general public audience.

The winning Contractor should have the experience and expertise to act as a strategic partner to the Directorate. This includes identifying key strategic insights from research as well as tangible implications and recommendations for our communications strategies, messages and visual assets.

The winning Contractor should be able to recommend a suitable methodology for each requirement under this Lot and be able to provide guidance on the pros and cons of different options including impact on speed of delivery versus robustness of results. Methodologies will vary on a project-by-project basis but are likely to predominantly include the following. Further, the Directorate will be open to hearing suggestions for additional, innovative methodologies from the winning Contractor for this Lot if they will further support the delivery of insight to inform our communications.

- > Online, telephone or face-to-face depth interviews
- > Online or face-to-face focus groups or mini focus groups
- > Online communities or digital ethnography
- > Co-creation, including workshops

Bidders should be able to effectively sample and recruit participants to participate in

qualitative research across all the key audiences outlined in Section 5 (Scope of the Requirement).

Requirements will vary on a project-by-project basis. They are likely to include:

- > A short proposal note. This should outline the Contractor's understanding of the project context and objectives, recommended research approach, proposed sample specification and recruitment strategy, a project timeline, and a breakdown of costs
- > A kick-off meeting to confirm approach, sample specification and timings with the Directorate
- > Design of research materials, allowing plenty of scope for the Directorate to feed into and shape materials
- > Recruitment and fieldwork
- > Thematic analysis of primary data. The Contractor should also proactively look for ways to elevate analysis to improve outputs (for example, utilising external sources to contextualise research findings, or using behavioural frameworks where this would improve the impact of our communications)
- > Interim / topline findings note
- > Full PowerPoint report with accompanying debrief. The Contractor should ensure final outputs are concise, easily navigable, have a clear narrative, identify key insights, and include strategic implications and recommendations for our communications. They should also seek to bring to life the views of research participants (for example, through the use of verbatim quotes)
- > Summary reports or additional, creative outputs

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Sustainability/Social Value / Weighting: 10

Quality criterion - Name: Technical / Weighting: 50

Price - Weighting: 40

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) Description

II.2.1) Title

Stage 1 - Lot 2 -Quantitative Research

Lot No

Lot 2

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79300000 - Market and economic research; polling and statistics

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This Lot requires a supplier to utilise quantitative research approaches to inform and evaluate our communications, often at pace. We need to be able to efficiently commission quantitative research to support our understanding of key audiences as well as to measure the impact of our communications.

The winning Contractor should have the experience and expertise to act as a strategic partner to the Directorate. This includes identifying key strategic insights from research as well as tangible implications and recommendations for our communications strategies.

The winning Contractor should be able to recommend a suitable methodology for each requirement under this Lot and be able to provide guidance on the pros and cons of different options including impact on speed of delivery versus robustness of results. Methodologies will vary on a project-by-project basis but are likely to predominantly include the following. Further, the Directorate will be open to hearing suggestions for additional, innovative methodologies from the winning Contractor for this Lot if they will further support the delivery of insight.

- > Online, telephone or face-to-face surveys
- > Statistical analysis (for example, Segmentations, Key Drivers Analysis, MaxDiff)

There may also be occasions where we require the successful Contractor for this Lot to conduct a small amount of qualitative interviews (for example, to inform questionnaire design / cognitive testing or to deepen understanding of specific survey results).

Bidders should be able to effectively sample participants across all the key audiences outlined in Section 5 (Scope of the Requirement).

Requirements will vary on a project-by-project basis. They are likely to include:

- > A short proposal note. This should outline the Contractor's understanding of the project context and objectives, recommended research approach, proposed sampling approach, a project timeline, and a breakdown of costs
- > A kick-off meeting to confirm approach, sampling and timings with the Directorate
- > Design of survey questionnaire, allowing plenty of scope for the Directorate to feed into and shape materials
- > Fieldwork and data collection
- > Weighted data tables with statistical significance testing and relevant cross breaks
- > Requirements for analysis and outputs will vary on a project-by-project basis. For some projects we will only require delivery of data tables to conduct analysis in-house, whilst for others we may include the following:
 - > Data analysis. The Contractor should also proactively look for ways to elevate analysis to improve outputs (for example, utilising external sources to contextualise research findings, or using behavioural frameworks where this would improve the impact of our communications)
 - > Interim / topline findings note
 - > Full PowerPoint report with charted results and accompanying debrief. The Contractor should ensure final outputs are concise, easily navigable, have a clear narrative, identify key insights, and include strategic implications and recommendations for our communications.
 - > Summary reports or additional, creative outputs

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Sustainability/Social Value / Weighting: 10

Quality criterion - Name: Technical / Weighting: 50

Price - Weighting: 40

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) Description

II.2.1) Title

Stage 1 - Lot 3 - Public Polling

Lot No

Lot 3

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79320000 - Public-opinion polling services
- 79320000 - Public-opinion polling services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

We need to be able to efficiently conduct public polling across the UK to measure public awareness of and attitudes to current policy areas, track uptake of certain behaviours, and explore attitudes to key trade-offs or tensions in environmental policy. Polling will cover the full Defra brief and be conducted on behalf of Defra Group.

A central function of this Lot will be the delivery of a public attitudes' tracker survey each quarter. The survey will comprise of regular, tracker questions with the option to include additional, ad hoc questions to provide rapid data on emerging priorities or challenges. We will also want to include a number of demographic and media consumption questions,

potentially with the option to link to relevant, external datasets for more nuanced information. We anticipate that each wave of the tracker will be around 15 minutes in length, and we would like to achieve a minimum, nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults.

Beyond the quarterly tracker, we may also require standalone polls on specific issues as and when they arise. The successful supplier should have capabilities for fast-turnaround polling and be able to provide guidance on the pros and cons of different polling options and the impact on speed of delivery versus robustness of results. This includes the capability to deliver very rapid turnaround polling (for example, in 24 hours).

We anticipate that research commissioned under this Lot will primarily take the form of online surveys. However, we require a supplier who is also able to conduct telephone polls and face-to-face polls should these additional methods be required. There may also be occasions where we require the successful Contractor for this Lot to conduct a small amount of qualitative interviews (for example, to inform questionnaire design / cognitive testing or to deepen understanding of specific polling results).

We anticipate that research commissioned under this Lot will predominantly be with a nationally representative sample of the UK public. However, on occasion, we may require polling or a sample boost of additional audiences, including:

Life stage segments, including young people

Members of the public living in rural areas

Pet owners

For delivery of the core requirement of this Lot, the quarterly tracker poll, we will require the successful supplier to deliver:

- > A short proposal confirming costs and timings for each wave
- > A short kick-off meeting for each wave to agree timings and anticipated changes to the questionnaire
- > Quality assurance of the survey questionnaire. The Directorate will provide a draft questionnaire ahead of each wave
- > Recruitment and fieldwork
- > Data processing and quality assurance
- > Weighted data tables with statistical significance testing and relevant cross breaks

Additional, ad-hoc polling will have the same requirements. However, there may also be occasions where we also request:

- > Interim / topline findings note
- > Full PowerPoint report with charted results and accompanying debrief. The Contractor should ensure any final outputs are concise, easily navigable, have a clear narrative, identify key insights, and include strategic implications and recommendations for our communications.
- > Summary reports or outputs

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Sustainability/Social Value / Weighting: 10

Quality criterion - Name: Technical / Weighting: 50

Price - Weighting: 40

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

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.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure

Notice number: [2024/S 000-037933](#)

Section V. Award of contract

Lot No

1

Title

Communications Research Framework – Lot 1

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

7 April 2025

V.2.2) Information about tenders

Number of tenders received: 5

Number of tenders received from SMEs: 5

Number of tenders received by electronic means: 5

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor

Blue Marble Research

The Old School House, Church St, Croscombe

Croscombe

BA5 3QS

Telephone

+44 7541999686

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UK - United Kingdom

National registration number

05639871

Internet address

<https://bluemarbleresearch.co.uk/>

The contractor is an SME

Yes

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

Initial estimated total value of the contract/lot: £1,500,000

Total value of the contract/lot: £1,500,000

V.2.5) Information about subcontracting

The contract is likely to be subcontracted

Value or proportion likely to be subcontracted to third parties

Proportion: 10 %

Short description of the part of the contract to be subcontracted

Field Mouse Research Limited

Role: recruiting qualitative participants for fieldwork. Approximate % of contractual obligations assigned to subcontractor: c.10%

Section V. Award of contract

Lot No

2

Title

Communications Research Framework – Lot 2

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

7 April 2025

V.2.2) Information about tenders

Number of tenders received: 4

Number of tenders received from SMEs: 4

Number of tenders received by electronic means: 4

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor

Yonder Consulting

Northburgh House, 10 Northburgh Street, London, EC1V 0AT

London

EC1V 0AT

Email

hello@yonderconsulting.com

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UK - United Kingdom

National registration number

08910939

The contractor is an SME

Yes

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

Initial estimated total value of the contract/lot: £1,500,000

Total value of the contract/lot: £1,500,000

V.2.5) Information about subcontracting

The contract is likely to be subcontracted

Value or proportion likely to be subcontracted to third parties

Proportion: 10 %

Short description of the part of the contract to be subcontracted

Field Mouse Research Limited

Sub-contractor will provide fieldwork services where the project requires them (i.e. when speaking to a specialist audience e.g. farmers)

10%

Section V. Award of contract

Lot No

3

Title

Communications Research Framework – Lot 3

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

7 April 2025

V.2.2) Information about tenders

Number of tenders received: 4

Number of tenders received from SMEs: 4

Number of tenders received by electronic means: 4

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor

Yonder Consulting

Northburgh House, 10 Northburgh Street, London, EC1V 0AT

London

EC1V 0AT

Email

hello@yonderconsulting.com

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UK - United Kingdom

National registration number

08910939

The contractor is an SME

Yes

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

Initial estimated total value of the contract/lot: £1,500,000

Total value of the contract/lot: £1,500,000

V.2.5) Information about subcontracting

The contract is likely to be subcontracted

Value or proportion likely to be subcontracted to third parties

Proportion: 10 %

Short description of the part of the contract to be subcontracted

Field Mouse Research Limited

Sub-contractor will provide fieldwork services where the project requires them (i.e. when speaking to a specialist audience e.g. farmers)

10%

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

Country

United Kingdom

Internet address

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>