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Award

Extension - Maintenance, Support, and Decommissioning of Legacy HRA Research System

Health Research Authority

F15: Voluntary ex ante transparency notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-028949

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-052a24

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Section I: Contracting authority/entity

I.1) Name and addresses

Health Research Authority

2nd Floor, 2 Redman Place, Stratford

London

E201JQ

Contact

Claire Luu

Email

commercial@hra.nhs.uk

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKI41 - Hackney and Newham

Justification for not providing organisation identifier

Not on any register

Internet address(es)

Main address

<http://www.hra.nhs.uk/>

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

Health

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Extension - Maintenance, Support, and Decommissioning of Legacy HRA Research System

Reference number

C100985

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 72000000 - IT services: consulting, software development, Internet and support

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

This Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency (VEAT) notice does not concern an award for a new

contract. It is published by the Health Research Authority (HRA) for the purpose of extending an existing contract for the development, maintenance and support of two principal and six supplementary systems/portals/sites, pending completion of a transition by the HRA to a new microservices architecture for the systems/portals/sites.

The HRA will rely upon Regulation 72(1)(b) for this extension on the basis that decommissioning and transition services cannot be provided by another provider and to appoint another provider would cause significant inconvenience and substantial duplication of costs to the HRA given the intricacies of the system and the fact that work is already underway - through a separately procured delivery partner - to develop the future system. The value of the extension does not exceed 50% of the original value of the contract. Please see section II.2.4 and IV.1.1 for more detail.

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: £1,600,000

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 48600000 - Database and operating software package
- 48800000 - Information systems and servers
- 72200000 - Software programming and consultancy services
- 72320000 - Database services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

The contract being extended was awarded for the provision of development, maintenance and support services for the HRA's Principal Operational Systems. These services include:

- Custom software development

- Technical architecture management, including software architecture design
- Production, maintenance, and enhancement of Technical documentation
- Software QA & QC
- Software development process management
- Software project management
- Issue tracking and task management software (JIRA or equivalent) hosting
- Development and testing environment provision and management
- Software deployment management
- 24/7 Windows server support and maintenance
- Microsoft Internet Information Services administration.
- Firewall management
- Provision, management, and maintenance of source control (Microsoft TFS) infrastructure
- 1st line help desk support
- Helpdesk VoIP/telephony infrastructure
- 2nd and 3rd line support
- Systems availability monitoring
- SQL Server database administration and performance tuning
- Additional professional services as required

The original contract award was published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) on 16 March 2016, reference number 2016/S 053-088027 (ITT60042), with a value of £3.7m. The original contract duration was three years, with options to extend by up to two further years.

In 2021, the HRA further extended the contract to 21 April 2023, valued at an additional £1.03m, to allow time to procure replacement services and ensure critical exit and

transition services. The extension relied on Regulation 72(1)(e) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015). The HRA considered that it could also have relied upon Regulation 72(1)(b) for that extension, though it chose to rely only on Regulation 72(1)(e).

In 2022, due to challenges in implementing the replacement services, the HRA revised its strategy to adopt a microservices architecture. The contract was further extended to 30 June 2025, at an additional value estimated at up to £1.672m + VAT, to allow for a further exit/migration period, the decommissioning of the existing system and the appointment of a new delivery partner to build the new microservices architecture. The HRA relied on Regulation 72(1)(b) for that extension, on the basis that the decommissioning and transition services could not be provided by another provider for technical and economic reasons and a change of supplier would cause significant inconvenience and substantial duplication of costs to the HRA, given the intricacies of the system and the planned procurement to appoint a new provider for the future provision of similar services.

The HRA then appointed a new delivery partner. The discovery phase of that delivery partner contract has made clear that the planned roadmap will not be delivered until July 2027.

The HRA therefore requires a further extension of this contract to 30 June 2027, with an option to extend by a further 3 months if needed.

This extension is being made under Regulation 72(1)(b), again on the basis that it is necessary to obtain additional services from the original contractor because a change of contractor cannot be made for technical and economic reasons given the need to continue operating the existing system, and as such any change of supplier would cause significant inconvenience and duplication of costs for the HRA.

The modification has an estimated value of £1.6m (and the sums paid further to the extension may well be lower than that), and so does not exceed 50% of the value of the original contract.

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Award of a contract without prior publication of a call for competition in the cases listed below

- The procurement falls outside the scope of application of the regulations

Explanation:

The HRA research systems and platforms are at the core of HRA services. Continuity of these services is critical for the HRA to fulfil its statutory responsibilities as a health research regulator. The purpose of the HRA Research Systems digital transformation Programme (RSP) is to replace the existing research systems under the current contract.

Previous contract extensions were intended to ensure that these systems could be maintained and progressively decommissioned by the existing provider, in parallel with the RSP's planned migration to a new platform. A strategic review of the RSP in early 2022 resulted in a decision to move away from the originally planned migration approach and instead adopt a microservices architecture.

A procurement exercise for a new RSP Delivery Partner (RSPDP) in late 2022 led to the award of a new contract on 23 October 2023, with development of the new architecture initially expected to be completed within 30 months of contract commencement. However, following discovery work, the estimated completion date has been revised to July 2027.

A further extension of the existing contract is therefore required to ensure continuity of service and support the phased decommissioning of existing systems in line with the revised RSP timeline.

A new provider cannot realistically provide these services and cannot manage the decommissioning of the current systems due to their bespoke nature, the significant risk of data corruption or loss, and the business critical nature of these services.

A technical assessment was conducted in 2022 which considered the realistic interoperability issues and timescales for transition, and confirmed that a change in contractor was likely to lead to a significant disruption to services and substantial duplication of costs. Work on a data migration strategy and mapping of the analytical needs also confirmed that the existing supplier holds significant backend system knowledge that is not readily transferable.

Transitioning to a new provider would therefore not only be inconvenient and risky but would also incur substantial duplication of cost, given the time and resource the HRA would need to invest in rationalising legacy data and procuring and onboarding a new provider.

Accordingly, the HRA considers that a modification of the existing contract is permitted under Regulation 72(1)(b) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, due to economic and technical reasons and the risk of significant inconvenience and cost.

The price increase in relation to this extension is up to £1.6m against an original contract value of £3.7m. This is within the 50% threshold set out in Regulation 72(1)(b). N.B. the sums actually paid further to the extension may well be lower than £1.6m.

In the interests of transparency around the modification to the existing contract, the HRA is voluntarily publishing this notice.

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: [2016/S 053-088027](#)

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

1 May 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

BGO Software OOD

251E Okolovrasten Pat blvd., fl. 15,

Sofia

1766

Email

ivailo.ivanov@bgosoftware.com

Country

Bulgaria

NUTS code

- BG - Bulgaria

Bulgarian Commercial Register

200119953

Internet address

www.bgosoftware.com

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: £1,600,000

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

High Court

Royal Courts of Justice

London

WC2A 2LL

Telephone

+44 2079476000

Country

United Kingdom