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Planning

Provision of Test of Competence Delivery - CBT Facilities

Nursing And Midwifery Council

F01: Prior information notice

Prior information only

Notice identifier: 2023/S 000-036933

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-0425f9

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Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

Nursing And Midwifery Council

23 Portland Place

LONDON

W1B1PZ

Contact

Jeremy Pewton

Email

jeremy.pewton@nmc-uk.org

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKI32 - Westminster

Companies House

1091434

Internet address(es)

Main address

<http://www.nmc.org.uk>

I.3) Communication

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Other type

Health Regulator

I.5) Main activity

Health

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Provision of Test of Competence Delivery - CBT Facilities

Reference number

C1325

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 80000000 - Education and training services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

This is a prior information notice for the forthcoming concession contract for a single partner who will deliver the Test of Competence - Computer-Based Test (CBT) on behalf of the NMC. The CBT applies to prospective nurses, midwives and nursing associates who trained outside the UK who wish to practise in the UK.

Further details can be found under Section VI (Complementary Information) of this notice.

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £10,500,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 48190000 - Educational software package
- 72200000 - Software programming and consultancy services
- 75121000 - Administrative educational services

- 80490000 - Operation of an educational centre
- 80530000 - Vocational training services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKI - London

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (the 'NMC') is a statutory body governed primarily by the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 (the 'Order'). The Order provides that the NMC must establish and maintain a register of qualified nurses, midwives and, since January 2019, nursing associates. The NMC regulates nurses and midwives in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. We are the independent regulator of more than 788,000 nurses and midwives in the UK, and nursing associates in England. Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery that improves everyone's health and wellbeing.

We use the Test of Competence (ToC) to assess the skills and knowledge of people applying to join our register/rejoin our register. The ToC currently comprises two elements and both are delivered in-person. The first is the computer-based test (the 'CBT'). The second is the objective structured clinical examination (the 'OSCE') which is a practical simulated assessment of applicants' practical skills and knowledge.

The CBT comprises of 115 multiple-choice questions in total with one correct answer to be selected out of a possible four answers. The exam permits candidates 3 hours and is split into two parts:

- Part A covers numeracy (15 questions, 30 minutes) and
- Part B covers clinical theory and knowledge (100 questions, 2 hours and 20 minutes) relating to nursing, nursing associates and midwifery. We have multiple test papers in circulation for all fields of nursing, midwifery and nursing associates, examples of practise tests can be found at Pearson Vue practice tests
- Candidates are permitted to have 3 attempts at the CBT, and if unsuccessful on their third attempt the application closes and they are not authorised to re-sit the test until a minimum of 6 months has passed. This is to prevent candidates from rote learning and to encourage candidates to prepare fully and reflect on their previous performance.

Please note that this contract is solely for the provision of services relating to publishing and delivery of the CBT and does not cover the design or development of test content. The ToC is currently designed and maintained by the Australian Council for Educational

Research (ACER).

Some key elements of this contract are outlined below:

- Strong geographical coverage and good levels of test accessibility giving us a global reach across the world.
- An established provision for managing all CBT bookings.
- Established and tested exam security platform, with suitable controls to maintain test integrity.
- Robust mechanisms to detect and prevent fraud and misconduct.
- A marking solution and result issuing process which can be integrated with our IT platform which is currently Dynamics 365.

Further information on the CBT can be found at CBT: Test of competence

Further context and background on the test can be found in our published test specifications, and an example can be found here [Nursing-test-specification](#). Please note that this covers both the OSCE and CBT, noting this service is for CBT only.

We are keen to engage with perspective suppliers with experience in this type of test delivery. We are also keen to explore the potential for innovation and hear suggestions and ideas from the market around innovative testing.

Whilst strong candidate experience is key in the delivery of a high-quality service, the maintenance of test security and test integrity is a significant aspect of this contract. The continuation of in-person delivery would necessitate robust security controls at testing sites for the prevention and detection of fraud and misconduct.

We currently test approximately 37,500 candidates per year; and test takers have historically opted to sit the test in India, Nigeria, and the Philippines. However, candidates residing in a range of countries sit our CBT monthly.

We are looking for a future supplier that can provide an end-to-end delivery service, beginning with the facility to publish test papers on their system, automatic account creation for our candidates to book their CBT, maintenance of the booking system and automatic importation of test results into our internal NMC systems.

Further details will be found in the market engagement questionnaire. The NMC intend to invite interested parties to a market engagement event (date to be advised, but expected mid-February 2024). Suppliers who are unable to attend the event will be able to request

slides and other documentation from the event by submitting a request via our e-Sourcing portal (Atamis).

The NMC has issued this Prior Information Notice (PIN) in order to conduct a market engagement exercise ahead of a forthcoming concession services tender for the provision of Test of Competence CBT delivery. Before tendering a new contract for these services, the NMC wishes to better understand the market and variety of options available which will help inform the eventual procurement exercise.

Providers interested in partaking in this market engagement exercise are requested to express an interest in this PIN and the Market Engagement Meeting via the Atamis e-Sourcing portal before midday on Monday 12 February 2024.

If you wish to take part, your organisation needs to be registered to our e-sourcing portal, Atamis: <https://nmcprocurementportal.force.com/s/Welcome>

Atamis Reference: C-1325

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II.2.14) Additional information

This is a PIN. Please note no tender documents have been issued at this stage - the functional requirements and capability specification will be published in the future Invitation to Tender documents with the Contract Notice. The procurement will use the Atamis e-Sourcing portal [<https://nmcprocurementportal.force.com/s/Welcome>]. To participate interested parties must be registered on Atamis with up-to-date contact details.

II.3) Estimated date of publication of contract notice

1 March 2024

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: No

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.3) Additional information

The NMC reserves the right to not progress to a full potential procurement exercise as a result of this PIN until they are fully ready to do so which will be communicated to the marketplace by the issuing of the formal Contract Notice which at this stage is estimated to be published by 1 March 2024.

Suppliers should not this procurement may fall into the new Procurement Bill Reforms. The Procurement Bill, which will reform the existing Procurement Rules is anticipated to 'go-live' October 2024. The existing legislation will apply until the new regime goes live and will also continue to apply to procurements started under the old rules. This information will be available at the time of the ITT being issued.

The contract value stated in this PIN is the current best estimate of the value of income to the supplier over a maximum 5 year contract. This may be revised if required prior to the issue of the Contract Notice.

Providers interested in partaking in this market engagement exercise are requested to express an interest in this PIN and the Market Engagement Meeting via the Atamis e-Sourcing portal before midday on Monday 12 February 2024.

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