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Planning

Project_4971- Provision of Bill of Lading Shipping Data

Department for Business & Trade

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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Changes to notice

This notice has been edited. The [previous version](#) is still available.

Updated Scope.

Scope

Description

Reference: Project_4971

Title: DBT – Bill of Lading Shipping Data

Background:

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) is currently managing a Contract for the provision of Bill of Lading (or shipping instructions) data until November 2025.

Bill of Lading data

Bill of Lading data is used by DBT to monitor container trade to and from the UK. DBT have been receiving Bill of Lading data for exports from the UK (where a container leaves from a UK port) and imports to the UK (where the container lands at a UK port or the container lands at a foreign port but with a final destination of the UK) under contract since 2021. The data that is provided under the current Contract is in the context of UK to World container trade, and World to UK container trade.

Contract Expiry:

The initial Contract (awarded to ThinkData Works in 2021) expired in November 2023 and covered two years' data.

The current Contract (awarded to ThinkData Works in 2023) expires in November 2025 and will cover two years' data.

The objective of this procurement is to capture the provision of Bill of Lading data (see Annex A for the data requirements) from November 2025 until November 2026 (with an option of extending until November 2027). Our budget is approximately £260,000 per year, excluding VAT.

Early Engagement Process & Market Questionnaire:

As detailed in the notice, DBT is looking to engage with relevant suppliers in the market. Suppliers that are interested in engaging are asked to complete the questionnaire at Annex B of this document and submit by the deadline stated below.

It should be noted that DBT makes no commitment to procure these services and may decide to not progress this any further following this engagement with the market. DBT are not liable for any costs incurred by respondents to this Early Engagement Questionnaire.

DBT reserves the right to change any information contained within the Early Engagement documentation at any time, and Potential Suppliers rely upon any information provided entirely at their own risk. This is not a formal invitation to tender.

Submission of Response:

Please submit your completed questionnaires in Annex B by no later than 05/09/2025.

Please submit your completed questionnaire to:

CommercialDDaT@BusinessAndTrade.gov.uk.

ANNEX A – High Level Requirements

1. Data requirements

Bill of Lading data for goods being transported to the UK from the world and from the world to the UK by container ship. The data should include:

- a. Container events including port departure time and port arrival time.
- b. Information on which ship the good was transported on. This must include International Maritime Organization ('IMO' number) and vessel name, and it is also desirable that Maritime Mobile Service Identity 'MMSI'). Information on both IMO and, ideally, MMSI designations are required to allow government to match data with UN Global Platform automated identification system (AIS) data.
- c. Carrier, shipper, forwarder, and container details. These details are required to identify the movements of the specific cargo containers that goods are shipped in. We also require the address data for the carrier, shipper and forwarder.
- d. Port of load, port of destination, place of receipt, and place of destination details. The data must allow us to identify where goods are shipped via intermediate ports.
- e. The types and details of goods being shipped. This should be the name/type of product using HS classification codes and the volume/weight of the product.
- f. Allocated container count (i.e. unit of measurement used to determine the cargo capacity relative to the total container capacity)

2. Data coverage

Bill of Lading data should provide comprehensive coverage by country against UK port freight annual statistics. Such coverage should be comprehensive covering a wide range of countries.

3. Data dictionary and model

A data dictionary and explanation of the data model will be required. In addition, an

indication of data size and the time lag between data month and provision of the data will be required.

4. Data sharing

Individual data access should be made available to DBT and the ONS, including any contractors supporting these organisations, for their statutory functions and any related purpose. This includes the Global Supply Chains Intelligence Programme, a DBT led project.

5. Data download

DBT will need to access and download the data through the supplier's data service (e.g. via a cloud platform, APIs, and/or bulk downloads).

6. Support

The supplier will need to provide support to DBT including helping them in understanding data, its uses, and its limitations. The supplier will also need to support digital staff to allow for data transfers and provide support to prevent outages and to prevent user end disruptions during downtime. In addition, support will be needed in the event of changes to data, delivery schedules, or timelines.

7. Publication

The supplier will need to agree to allow the UK Government to publish anonymous and non-disclosive findings in regular or ad hoc statistics and research.

8. Data retention

The supplier will need to accept UK Statistics Authority's Perpetual Requirement. This is an irrevocable, royalty free, non-exclusive, perpetual right for the DBT to retain the data or data downloaded during the duration of the Contract beyond the expiry of the Contract.

ANNEX B – QUESTIONNAIRE

No. Question

1 Data requirements

a) Can you confirm that you are able to provide the variables listed in the data requirements section in Annex A?

2 Data coverage

a) Are you able to provide an estimate of the data coverage that you can provide for UK – world container trade (by weight, for latest complete year)?

b) Are you able to provide an estimate of the data coverage that you can provide for world – UK container trade (by weight, for latest complete year)?

3 Data size

a) Can you provide the approximate size (in MB/GB) of providing the data required (for the latest complete year)?

4 Support

a) Can you confirm that you provide appropriate support for the buyer to access and understand the data?

b) Can you confirm you have previous experience with similar data sharing projects?

5 Pricing

a) Can you confirm you could provide the requirements specified within the proposed budget (260K per year ex VAT)?

6 Deliverables

a) What, (if anything), has the Authority missed or overlooked in setting out the High-Level Requirements?

b) What additional information, parameters or steers could the Authority provide to enable bidders to develop well-targeted proposals, and why?

7 Wider Marketplace Innovation:

a) Could you provide innovative ideas to further benefit the buyer for the requirements listed?

8 Current Advertising:

a) Are you currently advertising on any existing Crown Commercial Service (CCS) frameworks that match DBT's requirements?

b) If so, please list the current frameworks.

Total value (estimated)

- £520,000 excluding VAT
- £624,000 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 28 November 2025 to 27 November 2026
- Possible extension to 26 November 2027
- 1 year, 11 months, 29 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 72320000 - Database services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Engagement

Engagement deadline

5 September 2025

Engagement process description

DBT are actioning an early market engagement questionnaire.

Suppliers who believe they are capable of delivering the requirements DBT are seeking are invited to submit a completed questionnaire to DBT before the deadline, 05/09/2025.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

1 October 2025

Procedure

Special regime

Utilities

Contracting authority

Department for Business & Trade

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PZZJ-6312-QTTD

Old Admiralty Building

London

SW1A 2DY

United Kingdom

Email: DataAndSystems@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Region: UKI32 - Westminster

Organisation type: Public authority - central government