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Tender

250079 - Contract for the Provision of Laboratory Animal Health Monitoring Services in Compliance with FELASA Guidelines

Queen's University Belfast

UK4: Tender notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-059272

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05a11d

Published 24 September 2025, 2:02pm

Scope

Description

The Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences' Biological Services Core Technology Unit (BSU), at Queen's University Belfast (Queen's) wish to procure the Provision of Laboratory Animal Health Monitoring Services in Compliance with FELASA Guidelines

Total value (estimated)

- £700,000 excluding VAT
- £840,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 5 January 2026 to 4 January 2029
- Possible extension to 4 January 2033
- 7 years

Description of possible extension:

options to extend by up to a further 48 months (4 x 12-month extensions)

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 71900000 - Laboratory services
 - 85148000 - Medical analysis services
 - 85200000 - Veterinary services
-

Lot 1. 1 Lot 1: Sentinel Animal Health Monitoring (Sacrificial)

Description

This Lot will cover the provision of health monitoring services for sentinel animals using traditional sacrificial sampling methods. Activities under this Lot will include:

- Provision of validated sample collection kits and consumables for sentinel programmes.
- Testing of sentinel animal samples (including serology, parasitology, and microbiology) in accordance with FELASA recommendations.
- Reporting of results with interpretation and expert advice where required.

Please note: It is the University's strategic aim to phase out the use of sacrificial sentinel animals over the life of this contract, in line with the 3Rs principle of Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement. Contractors should support this goal by advising on alternative approaches.

Lot value (estimated)

- £280,000 excluding VAT
- £336,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 2. 2 Lot 2: Non-Animal Health Monitoring Methods

Description

This Lot will cover provision of non-animal or environmental monitoring methods to replace or reduce the need for sentinel animals. Activities under this Lot will include:

- Environmental sampling programmes (e.g. exhaust air dust (EAD) testing or soiled bedding PCR sampling).
- Provision of all necessary equipment, kits, and consumables for non-animal monitoring.
- Testing and reporting of environmental samples to FELASA-compliant standards.

- Advice on the design and implementation of sentinel-free health monitoring programmes.

Please note: In conjunction with the University's aim to reduce or phase out our reliance on sentinel animal testing (lot 1), this element of the contract (lot 2) may increase over the lifetime of the contract.

Lot value (estimated)

- £280,000 excluding VAT
- £336,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 3. 3 Lot 3: Zebrafish Health Monitoring

Description

This Lot will cover health monitoring services for zebrafish colonies which we expect to have late 2025, early 2026. Activities under this Lot will include:

- Provision of appropriate sampling kits and guidance for zebrafish health monitoring (e.g. screening for *Mycobacterium* spp. and other relevant pathogens).
- Testing of submitted samples in accordance with FELASA-AALAS health monitoring recommendations (DOI: 10.30802/AALAS-CM-22-000034). The ability to screen for Viral Haemorrhagic Septicaemia and Spring Viremia of Carp (SVC) would also be valuable and may become of relevance during the course of this contract. Detailed reporting with interpretation and recommendations for colony management.

Lot value (estimated)

- £140,000 excluding VAT
- £168,000 including VAT

Same for all lots

CPV classifications and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Participation

Particular suitability

Lot 1. 1 Lot 1: Sentinel Animal Health Monitoring (Sacrificial)

Lot 2. 2 Lot 2: Non-Animal Health Monitoring Methods

Lot 3. 3 Lot 3: Zebrafish Health Monitoring

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Tender submission deadline

28 October 2025, 4:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

<https://in-tendhost.co.uk/queensuniversitybelfast/asp/Home>, please register if not already done so and submit tender via the In-tend portal.

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Award decision date (estimated)

18 December 2025

Recurring procurement

Publication date of next tender notice (estimated): 4 January 2033

Award criteria

Name	Description	Type
Simple description	Technical 40% Mandatory Specification - Pass/Fail Qualitative 35% • Team Expertise 10% • Phasing out/reducing Sacrificial Sentinel Animals 10% • Reporting 5% • Key risks 5% • Training & Technical Support 5% Sustainable Procurement 5% Price 60%	Price

Weighting description

Technical 40%

Mandatory Specification - Pass/Fail

Qualitative 35%

- Team Expertise 10%
- Phasing out/reducing Sacrificial Sentinel Animals 10%
- Reporting 5%
- Key risks 5%
- Training & Technical Support 5%

Sustainable Procurement 5%

Price 60%

Other information

Payment terms

30 days from receipt of a valid and undisputed invoice

Description of risks to contract performance

1. Failure to Deliver Timely Results

o Delays in processing or reporting test results could compromise animal health, welfare, and research timelines.

2. Loss or Damage of Samples

- o Improper handling during transport or processing may lead to invalid results and the need for re-sampling. Resampling, in particular with sacrificial methods, would be contrary to the 3Rs and would only be undertaken as a last resort.

3. Non-Compliance with FELASA Guidelines

- o Failure to adhere to FELASA standards could result in inaccurate health status declarations, regulatory non-compliance, or reputational damage to the University. This could impact on Biosecurity and the health status of our Laboratory animal colonies and negatively impact upon research programs.

4. Quality Assurance Failures

- o Lack of appropriate accreditation or failures in contractor quality management systems could undermine confidence in results.

5. Data Security and Confidentiality Breach

- o Inadequate data protection could compromise sensitive health monitoring information.

6. Disruption of Service

- o Operational issues such as staff shortages, supply chain disruptions, or laboratory closures (e.g. due to emergencies or pandemics) could interrupt service delivery, create unacceptable gaps in our health monitoring program and impact upon unit biosecurity.

7. Failure to Support 3Rs Progression

- o Contractors unwilling or unable to advise on replacement of sentinel animals with non-animal monitoring methods could impede the University's ethical commitments and strategy.

8. Misinterpretation of Results

- o Poorly communicated or unclear reporting and subsequent guidance could lead to inappropriate colony management decisions.

9. Health and Safety Risks

- o Inadequate sample kit design or guidance could expose BSU staff to biohazards during collection and handling.

10. Cost Overruns

o Unanticipated price increases or unclear charging structures could lead to budgetary pressures.

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Open procedure

Justification for not publishing a preliminary market engagement notice

In accordance with the Procurement Act 2023, a Prior Market Engagement (PME) exercise was not undertaken for this requirement. This decision is justified on the basis that a suitable contract is already in place, and the relevant Unit has confirmed that they have a clear and sufficient understanding of the service requirements. As such, no further market engagement was deemed necessary.

Documents

Associated tender documents

<https://in-tendhost.co.uk/queensuniversitybelfast.aspx/Home>

Contracting authority

Queen's University Belfast

- Charity Commission for Northern Ireland: 101788

University Rd

Belfast

BT7 1NN

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@qub.ac.uk

Region: UKN06 - Belfast

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

Devolved regulations that apply: Northern Ireland