

Description of Contract:

The FCA is appointing a bond consolidated tape (CT) provider, to establish a consolidated tape for bonds to collate market data. A CT collates market data, such as prices and volumes associated with trades in a financial market. It aims to provide a comprehensive picture of transactions in a specific asset class. It will bring together trades executed on trading venues as well as those arranged over the counter. A CT provider is a type of Data Reporting Service Provider (DRSP) alongside Approved Reporting Mechanisms (ARMs) and APAs. We expect a CT to strengthen UK markets by making them more transparent and liquid. Whilst the FCA will receive a feed of CT data, the CT providers primary purpose will be to provide data to market participants. More information on the CT can be found on the FCA's website at the following link: <https://www.fca.org.uk/markets/data-reporting-services-providers/bond-consolidated-tape>

This procurement exercise is intended to identify a potential applicant (and a reserve applicant) that may be capable of acceptance at authorisation. Whilst this tender process will test certain requirements of the authorisation application thereby putting the successful bidder in a good position to further develop and finalise its solution during the authorisation process, authorisation is a separate regulatory exercise and there is no assurance that the successful bidder may meet the necessary criteria of the authorisation process. The applicant is responsible for appropriately preparing and submitting a suitable application for authorisation. Bidders should review and familiarise themselves with the [Authorisation process](#) and the requirements of the authorisation process before engaging and submitting a response for this tender. More information can be found on the FCA's website at the following link: <https://www.fca.org.uk/markets/data-reporting-services-providers-drsp>

Once Authorised, the CT provide will provide the CT services for an initial term of five (5) years with an option to extend the contract for a further two (2) years in the limited circumstances specified in regulation 6 of The Data Reporting Services Regulations 2024. There is no payment by the FCA to the provider in exchange for the CT services. The CT provider will be able to charge users for accessing the data. More information on the types of licences required and how pricing will be managed is included in Schedule 7 of the Draft Contract issued at Annex B of the ITT The anticipated total value of the contract to the CT provider is in the region of £29.5million.

The CTP must pay a periodic Supervision fee as a DRSP in fee-block G25 to the FCA for the duration of the CT Contract. The FCA consult annually on its fees through a Consultation Paper in April and therefore cannot predict the rate for 2026/27 with certainty. The rate for DRSPs in 2024/25 is £2.38 per £1,000 of income as a DRSP, subject to a minimum payment of £27,402. Details of the payment of Supervision fees can be found on the FCA website: www.fca.org.uk/firms/fees/pay-annual-fee

Justification for no Prior Market Engagement Notice

The FCA has been discussing a bond CT with market participants since 2020. The discussion started by seeking views on suggestions for reforms to UK wholesale markets and then moved on to discussing the specifics of how a bond CT would operate. We have had roundtables with groups of firms, bilateral meetings with individual firms and participated in panel discussions at industry conferences and held a public consultation. We made clear from the outset of these discussions that we wanted to speak to potential providers of a bond CT and in 2024 asked, via a statement on our website, for informal expressions of interest from potential providers. We

then had in September and October 2024 discussions with each of those who expressed interest about the details of how the e-auction process would work, to raise awareness of the forthcoming tender. The views taken from these engagements have been used to ensure that the process designed is fair and robust. The views expressed by potential providers and feedback from the public consultation have played an important role in shaping the regulatory framework for the bond CT and our approach to the e-auction process.

Links to the consultation papers can be found here:

- www.fca.org.uk/publication/consultation/cp23-15.pdf
- www.fca.org.uk/publications/consultation-papers/cp23-33-payments-data-providers-drsp-policy-statement-framework-consolidated-tape-cp23-15

The FCA did not issue a preliminary market engagement notice in accordance with section 17 of the Procurement Act 2023, given the pre-market engagement was undertaken prior to entry into force of the Act. Further the FCA considers that it had done extensive public consultation, ensuring it had highlighted the opportunity to the wider market via various means as explained above, so that it is proportionate to determine that no further preliminary market engagement notice is at this point required.

Competitive Flexible Description:

The FCA is running a tender under the Competitive Flexible Procedure. The process consists of the following stages:

- Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ):

Bidders should provide by the 25th April 2025 the following:

Part 1 - confirmation of Core Supplier Information: suppliers participating in this procurement will be expected to register on the Central Digital Platform (**CDP**). Suppliers can submit their Core Supplier Information and share this information with the FCA via the CDP.

Part 2 - additional exclusions information: procurement legislation provides for an ‘exclusion regime’ and a published ‘debarment’ list to safeguard procurement from suppliers who may pose a risk (for example, due to misconduct or poor performance). Suppliers must submit their own (and their Connected Persons) exclusions information as well as information regarding sub-contractors.

The FCA will review information provided by Bidders in respect of Part 1 and Part 2. Any Bidder that fails to pass a mandatory or discretionary grounds for exclusion and is not able to satisfy the FCA that appropriate ‘self cleaning’ measures have resolved the issue, will be excluded from continuing in the Procurement, and their Outline Solution will not be reviewed. Responses included in the Core Supplier Information in respect of economic and financial stability will not be assessed in this Procurement. Financial viability and financial resourcing of Bidders will be assessed at the tender stage.

- **Outline Solution Stage:**

A number of Technical Questions have been included at Appendix G of the Invitation to Tender (ITT) document. Bidders should provide a response to these questions by 25th April 2025.

The FCA will review and assess each narrative response to the Tender Questions and provide written feedback based on the Outline Solution to enable Bidders to develop their solutions for Final Tender. Scores from the Outline Solution stage do not count towards Final Tender evaluation.

A Draft Contract has been issued with as Annex B of the ITT. Bidders may raise clarification questions on the contract. In reviewing the comments, the FCA shall make any amendments to the Draft Contract as it deems necessary. Amendments will be made which the FCA, in its discretion, regards as acceptable and which reflect general industry requirements, amendments with general application, comments which are perfectly reasonable and fair or where an ambiguity or error has been highlighted. The FCA will not distort competition nor act unfairly and amendments will not be made to benefit one or just a few Bidders. Even where an amendment is proposed by a number of Bidders, however, the FCA does not undertake to accept it and will do so at its discretion. The FCA may have sound commercial reasons for a position or requirement and Bidders must bid on the basis of the final version of the Draft Contract as published by the FCA regardless of any clarifications they may have submitted. The FCA will circulate any updated version of the Draft Contract to all Bidders at the outset of the Final Tender Stage, incorporating any amendments resulting from the Bidders' comments and highlighting any changes which have been made.

- **Final Tender Stage**

The same Tender Questions are to be answered for both Outline Solution and Final Tender Stage. Bidders are therefore expected to consider the feedback provided at Outline Solution Stage to develop their solution where necessary for Final Tenders. Bidders cannot rely on their Outline Solution at Final Tender Stage.

Final Tender's are due to be submitted by 13th June 2025 and each questions response will be assessed against the criteria set out in paragraph 9.2.2 of the ITT.

The weightings as set out at paragraph 9.2.8 of the ITT will then be applied to those scores. If a Bidders score fails to meet the Minimum Score for any question outlined in paragraph 9.2.8 of the ITT, that Bidder may be excluded from the Procurement.

Any Bidder achieving a score of 65% and above at the Final Tender Stage will be taken forward to the next stage of the Procurement.

If there is not more than 1 Bidder scoring 65% or above, then the top scoring 3 Bidders will be taken forward to the E-Auction Stage, provided those top 3 scoring Bidders achieve more than 60%. Where only 2 Bidders score above 60% those 2 Bidders will be taken forward to E-Auction Stage. All other Bidders will be excluded from the procurement process.

In circumstances where there is not more than 1 Bidder able to progress to the E-Auction based on the above then the FCA reserves the right to cancel the Procurement or switch to a direct award process under Section 43 of the Procurement Act 2023.

Summary of Award Criteria for Technical Questions

Category	Subcategory (where relevant)	Question Number	Minimum Score	Weighting
Policies				
FCA Policies		0.	Pass / Fail	
Commercial Proposal				
E-auction base line price questions		1.	N/A	N/A
		2.	N/A	N/A
Plans and processes				
Financial Resourcing		3.	3	40
Conflicts		4.	2	10
Organisational Structure		5.	2	8
		6.	2	8
		7.	2	8
		8.	2	8
		9.	2	8
Implementation Plan		10.	3	20
		11.	2	10
Risk Management		12.	2	6
		13.	2	6
		14.	Pass / Fail	
		15.	2	6
		16.	2	6
		17.	2	8
		18.	2	8
IT Organisation Structure and Governance	Organisation Structure	19.	2	15
		20.	2	15
	Governance Structure	21.	2	30
	Concept	22.	2	10
		23.	2	10

IT Concept and Architecture	Architecture	24.	2	8
		25.	2	8
		26.	2	6
		27.	2	8
IT System Development Plan		28.	2	20
		29.	2	10
Quality of the CT service and system performance				
Service quality obligations		30.	Pass / Fail	
		31.	2	10
		32.	2	20
		33.	2	10
		34.	2	10
		35.	2	10
		36.	2	10
Aggregation	Data ingestion and consolidation	37.	Pass / Fail	
		38.	2	20
		39.	2	10
		40.	2	20
		41.	2	20
	Data dissemination	42.	2	20
		43.	Pass / Fail	
		44.	2	15
		45.	Pass / Fail	
		46.	2	15
		47.	Info only	
		48.	Pass / Fail	
		49.	2	20
Management of incomplete or potentially erroneous information		50.	2	30
		51.	Pass / Fail	
		52.	2	20

	53.	2	20
Testing and capacity	54.	2	20
	55.	2	30
System Performance Level	56.	2	30
	57.	2	20
	58.	2	20
Resilience	59.	2	30
	60.	2	20
	61.	2	20
	62.	2	20
	63.	2	20
	64.	2	20
	65.	2	20
Cyber Security	66.	2	30
	67.	2	10
	68.	2	20
	69.	2	10
	70.	2	15
	71.	2	20
	72.	2	10
	73.	2	15
	74.	2	10
	75.	2	10

- **E-Auction:**

Instructions to engage in the E-Auction and the methodology that will be used in the E-Auction are outlined in Annex H of the ITT. Bidders who meet the relevant quality threshold and progress to the E-Auction stage will be provided with further instructions on how to access the E-Auction. Such bidders will also be given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the FCA's E-Auction software prior to the E-Auction and be invited to onboard to such software to enable such familiarisation.

The Winning Bidder from the E-Auction will be considered the preferred Bidder of this procurement process. The second placed Bidder from the E-Auction will be considered the reserve Bidder of this Procurement process.

The FCA reserves the right to amend refine the award criteria, or include any additional rounds of feedback, as part of the process.

Below is the **indicative timetable**. This is provided for information and may be subject to change:

	Provisional Dates
Tender Notice published	07/03/2025
Tender documents (including Participation and Tender Stages) issued to Bidders	
Bidder clarification deadline	28/03/2025
Deadline for Participation Stage and Outline Solution responses	25/04/2025
Evaluation of Participation Stage and Outline Solution responses	16/05/2025
Notification and feedback on Participation Stage and Outline Solution responses	23/05/2025
Final Tender Stage start	26/05/2025
Bidder clarification deadline	04/06/2025
Deadline for Final Tender Stage responses	13/06/2025
Evaluation of Final Tender Stage responses	11/07/2025
Notification of Final Tender Stage	18/07/2025
Invitation to E-Auction	22/07/2025
Mock run of E-Auction	31/07/2025
Estimated conclusion of E-Auction	22/08/2025
Notification of E-Auction outcome	26/08/2025
Contract Award	17/09/2025

The FCA will aim to make a determination on the winning bidder's application for authorisation by the end of 2025.