

Request for Tenders for the Establishment of a Single-Party Framework - Provision of Temporary Agency Resources for the Health Research Board (HRB)

Procedure	Open Procedure
Issue Date	As per etenders
Closing Date for Queries	As per etenders
Closing Date for Submissions	As per etenders
Contact for Queries	Via eTenders
Please note that information relating to this Request for Tender, including clarifications and changes, will be published on the Irish Government Procurement Opportunities Portal www.etenders.gov.ie. Registration is free of charge and there is no charge for documents. Please note that the Contracting Authority accepts no responsibility for information relayed (or not relayed) via third parties.	

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1 ABOUT THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

1.1 The Contracting Authority

The Health Research Board, herein after referred to as the “HRB” or the “Contracting Authority”, is the authority responsible for this procurement.

The Health Research Board (HRB) (www.hrb.ie) is a statutory agency under the aegis of the Department of Health. The HRB’s mission is to support research that improves people’s health, promotes evidence-informed care and creates solutions to societal challenges. Our vision is ‘better health through excellent research, data and evidence’. The HRB oversees an approximate €50 million investment in health research activity each year.

Further information is available at our corporate website www.hrb.ie.

1.2 Disclaimer

This Request for Tenders (RFT) document issued herewith (“the Document”) is for information only and does not constitute, and shall not be interpreted as, an offer for sale, prospectus, or the basis of a contract.

Tenderers are recommended to read the documents thoroughly. While all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that the information set out in the Document is accurate and up to date, no representation or warranty, express or implied, is or will be made or given in relation to the accuracy or the completeness of any information contained in the Document or otherwise provided by or on behalf of the Contracting Authority (in writing or otherwise) to any interested party or its advisers. No responsibility or liability for any loss or damage arising as a result of reliance on these documents, or for the information contained in these documents or for any omission is or will be accepted by the Contracting Authority or by any of its officers, employees, agents or professional advisers. No officer, employee, agent, or professional adviser of the company has any authority to give or make any representation or warranty, express or implied, in relation to such information. The Contracting Authority’s officers, employees, agents, and professional advisers expressly disclaim any and all liability arising out of such documentation or information and any errors or omissions in or from the documents and information.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to discontinue the procurement process at any time.

1.3 Use of eTenders

Please note that information relating to this Request for Tender, including clarifications and changes, will be published on the Irish Government Procurement Opportunities Portal www.etenders.gov.ie. Registration is free of charge and there is no charge for documents. Please note that the Contracting Authority accepts no responsibility for information relayed (or not relayed) via third parties. In order to submit a response, it is mandatory to have **ASSOCIATED** your company with the competition using the eTenders log in.

1.4 Use of a Tender Response Document

The Contracting Authority has provided a Tender Response Document (TRD) as a separate document for tenderers to use in preparing their response to this tender. This document and format must be used.

Tenderers should note that personalisation of the TRD is not allowed, and they must not add their branding/colours to the TRD.

Please note that in addition to this RFT, the following documents form part of the tender documentation:

- Tender Response Document
- Appendix 1 – Agency Staff Protocol
- Appendix 2 - Resource Profiles
- Draft contract documents – to be uploaded in due course
- ESPD Template
- Any Clarification documents issued by the Contracting Authority during the tender submission period. Tenderers must ensure they regularly monitor eTenders and review any Clarification documents published.

It is recommended to upload your response as a **Zip file** in order to protect the integrity of file names.

1.5 Small and Medium Enterprise Participation

It is the policy of the Contracting Authority to promote participation by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) on a fair and equal basis.

SMEs are encouraged to explore the possibilities of forming relationships with other SMEs or with larger enterprises to meet the financial, economic or technical capacity requirements of the competition, if required.

Tenderers may include individuals, partnerships, limited companies, groupings or any combination of the foregoing with or without legal personality. However, a grouping if successful will be required to establish legal personality to enter the framework agreement / contract.

Tenderers are reminded that they may rely on the resources of other entities to establish the requirements on condition that they can prove to the satisfaction of the Contracting Authority that they will have these resources at their disposal when necessary.

If the tender is from a consortium / joint venture, tenderers must ensure that all the relevant information is provided and where necessary, provide the information requested separately for each party. Relevant information relates to where a tenderer is relying on the resources to qualify (e.g. turnover, personnel, previous experience) and/or to deliver contracts. The consortium must appoint a single point of contact who will assume overall responsibility for delivery, and who is authorised to sign the framework agreement / contract on behalf of all consortia members. The Contracting Authority will not act as an arbitrator between members of consortia.

2 ABOUT THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

2.1 Type of Framework

The Contracting Authority invites tenders for the establishment of a framework agreement. A framework agreement constitutes a means of establishing overall terms and conditions in accordance with which, for a specified duration, individual contracts may or may not be awarded.

This competition relates to the establishment of a single-party framework with one economic operator.

2.2 Overview of Requirements under the Framework Agreement

2.2.1 The Scope of the Framework Agreement

The scope of the Framework Agreement is for the provision of agency staff to the Client to fill certain temporary resource requirements. Tenderers should refer to Section 3 of this document for a detailed description of the scope, functional requirements, and related services to be delivered under the Framework Agreement.

2.3 Numbers admitted to the Framework

The framework agreement will be established as a single-party framework agreement with the tenderer selected following the tender stage and the application of the award criteria and subject to that tenderer meeting the minimum criteria and rules.

2.4 Duration of the Framework Agreement

The framework agreement will be established for an initial period of two (2) years. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to extend the Framework Agreement twice by a further period of one (1) year, subject to satisfactory performance, ongoing business needs and budgetary provisions.

The maximum duration of the Framework Agreement, including any extensions, will not exceed four (4) years. The option to extend is at the sole discretion of the Contracting Authority and is intended to ensure continuity of service quality and operational stability throughout the life of the Framework Agreement. The Contracting Authority confirms that the period of any contracts awarded under the framework agreement may extend beyond the date of expiry of the agreement.

2.5 Estimated Value for the Framework Agreement

It is envisaged that the maximum spend under this four-year framework agreement will not exceed €5,000,000 excluding VAT.

It is emphasised, however, that this figure is provided strictly for indicative purposes only as there is no guaranteed expenditure under the framework agreement.

2.6 Awarding Contracts under the Framework Agreement

Under a single-party framework agreement, contracts may be awarded directly on foot of the original tenders or by consultation with the Framework Member and invitation to provide a supplementary tender

within the constraints laid down in this tender documentation and the framework agreement terms and conditions.

2.7 Right to tender outside of the Framework

The Contracting Authority intends to use the framework for the procurement of requirements falling within its scope during the specified period; however, it reserves the right to go outside the framework agreement for the procurement of any requirement without reference to the Framework Member. Admission to a framework agreement does not guarantee the award of any contract to any economic operator, nor does it give the Framework Member the right to be consulted in respect of, or tender for, any contract.

2.8 Compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the Framework Agreement

Admission to the framework agreement will be conditional upon acceptance of the Contracting Authority's Framework Terms and Conditions as appended at the relevant Appendix.

Tenderers are required to review these terms and conditions and indicate their acceptance thereof as part of their tender submission. Any reservation with regard to these terms should be submitted as a query in accordance with the procedure described in the Section below in the Instructions to Tenderers of this document.

2.9 Agency Contract Terms and Conditions

In addition, tenderers should review the Agency Contract Terms and Conditions which will apply to each discrete assignment (call-off contract) under the framework, as appended at the relevant Appendix.

2.10 Award to Runner Up

If for any reason, it is not possible to admit to the framework agreement the tenderer invited following the conclusion of this competitive process, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to invite the next highest scoring tenderer to join the framework agreement as appropriate, at any time during the tender validity period.

If it is not possible following the conclusion of the competitive process to award the initial contract to the designated successful tenderer from this competitive process; the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award the initial contract to the tenderer with the next highest score based on the original competition, at any time during the tender validity period.

If, following the award of any contract under this framework agreement during the tender validity period, the Framework Member cannot, for whatever reason, deliver the required services to the satisfaction of the Contracting Authority; the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award the framework to the next highest scoring tenderer.

3 Detailed Specification of Requirements

The Health Research Board (HRB) (www.hrb.ie) is a statutory agency under the aegis of the Department of Health. The HRB's mission is to lead national investment in health research by building capacity, supporting excellence, embedding ethics, and ensuring that high-quality evidence is translated into better policy and care. Our vision is 'better health through excellent research, data and evidence'. The HRB oversees an approximate €50 million investment in health research activity each year.

The HRB is now tendering for a single-supplier framework agreement for the provision of recruitment services for temporary agency staff.

The contract for these services will be from 2027 to 2029 with the option to extend twice by a period of one (1) year, subject to satisfactory performance, ongoing business needs and budgetary provisions. The total duration of the contract will not exceed four (4) years.

3.1 Scope of Requirement under the Framework Agreement

The HRB has a recurring requirement for agency staff to cover various needs on short-term assignments basis. The successful tenderer must source and deliver suitably qualified personnel based on the HRB requirements.

Agency staff are required in both scientific areas and in corporate support services with temporary contracts may be provided on a specified purpose basis e.g. maternity cover, etc. and fixed term temporary assignments. Generally, temporary contracts would not exceed eleven (11) months in any one assignment.

The successful tenderer will also be required to ensure continuity/delivery of service and account management.

Tenderers should note that there is no guarantee of any volume, value or frequency of services under this contract.

The HRB ensures full accessibility for all of its staff and for agency assignments.

3.2 Recruitment Process

The HRB will provide a role profile including key duties and requirements to the successful tenderer once a temporary post is required.

The successful tenderer may be required to (in conjunction with the HRB HR department) then:

- Source suitable candidates
- Co-ordinate shortlisting
- Notifications to successful and unsuccessful candidates
- Countersign contracts
- Record Keeping

An Agency Staff Protocol is provided at Appendix 1.

3.3 Transfer of Agency Staff to the HRB

Agency staff may wish to apply for roles that may arise within the HRB. If the candidate is successful, the service provider will not charge the HRB a finder's fee in such circumstances.

The HRB would expect the service provider to secure a replacement for any vacancy created by the agency staff vacating a role during an ongoing contract, and the contract would continue as normal.

Tenderers are to factor this into their management fee in their cost proposal.

3.4 Account Management

The Contracting Authority requires tenderers to nominate a dedicated account manager who will act as the main point of contact for the duration of the contract. This person shall have the authority to deal with all matters in relation to the contract and be responsible for the satisfactory delivery of the services required. The duties of the account manager will include the following:

- Overall responsibility for a good working relationship with the Contracting Authority.
- Be familiar, at a high level, with the scope and volume of the Contracting Authority's general workload and be aware of any key matters.
- Meet as and when required to review the relationship and examine performance.
- Deal with disputes, complaints or concerns that cannot be adequately resolved.
- Regularly give and receive both formal and informal feedback on the relationship, workloads, processes, areas and suggestions for improvement and cost savings.
- Proactively discuss with the Contracting Authority ways of improving efficiency regarding service delivery in general.
- Meet bi-annually with the HRB contract owner for a contract management review meeting

NOTE: Tenderers will note that account management activities will be non-billable (i.e., the Contracting Authority will not pay separately for account management activities). The Contracting Authority will nominate authorised staff to liaise with the successful Framework Member and delegate as required.

3.5 Estimated Costs

The salary for each agency staff will be aligned to Point 1 of the HRB salary scale applicable to the relevant grade. The total cost to the HRB for each agency staff will comprise salary, employee PRSI, agency management fee, and VAT.

The management fee charged by the successful tenderer must include an annual leave charge for the agency staff. This will ensure that when an agency staff takes annual leave, they are paid directly by the agency and the HRB are not invoiced for this. Holidays are to be taken pro-rata over the engagement.

As outlined above, the HRB will not be liable for any transfer or other fees payable should an agency staff later secure a permanent role in the HRB. This should be factored into the management fee.

3.6 Invoice Procedure

The successful tenderer must invoice the HRB monthly in a PDF format which may include expenses properly incurred by agency staff in discharge of their duties, in accordance with the relevant Circular, which, where appropriate, are supported by vouched receipts.

No invoices will be accepted without a Purchase Order number referenced on the invoice. Timesheets should be included in the PDF document.

All monthly invoices are to be received together within the first two weeks of the following month. A creditors statement must also be provided monthly.

The Contracting Authority will pay expenses at rates no greater than the public service travel and subsistence rates as set out in the relevant Circulars (as may be amended, replaced or updated from time to time) including but not limited to:

- Circular 11/1982 - Travelling and Subsistence Regulations;
- Circular 04/2025 – Domestic Subsistence Allowances;
- Circular 07/2017 – Subsistence Allowances Abroad;
- Circular 16/2022 – Motor Travel Rates; and,
- and any other applicable Circulars or instructions issued by the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure Public Service Reform and Digitalisation.

The Contracting Authority will not discharge agency staff's expenses directly. The successful tenderer must discharge the agency staff's properly incurred expenses in a timely manner. The successful tenderer may then reclaim the expenses from the Contracting Authority via the monthly invoice procedure.

In order for the successful tenderer to reclaim any agency staff's expenses from the Contracting Authority, they must be (i) properly incurred and no greater than the rates as set out in the applicable Circulars; (ii) reasonable and supported by vouched receipts (where appropriate); and, (iii) incurred in accordance with the Contracting Authority's expense policy. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to discharge expenses that do not comply with these requirements.

4 SELECTION CRITERIA

The Contracting Authority is using the **Open** procedure for the award of this framework agreement, therefore, while all interested parties may submit a tender, only those tenders that are deemed valid and that meet all of the selection criteria listed below will be considered under the award criteria. In order to demonstrate a tenderers' qualifications, tenderers are required to provide the information set out below in the Tender Response Document (TRD) which is based on a self-declaration model, however tenderers are required to provide the minimum information required.

4.1 Use of the European Single Procurement Document

In accordance with Directive 2014/24/EU, tenderers may have compiled a European Single Procurement Document (ESPD), either electronically via the eESPD on eTenders or as a separate uploaded attachment with the tender response, which will be accepted as evidence of compliance with the selection criteria on condition that all information self-declared will be provided promptly on request at any time prior to an award decision.

4.2 Relying on the Standing of Other Entities

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are encouraged to explore the possibilities of forming relationships with other SMEs or with larger enterprises to meet the financial, economic or technical capacity requirements of the competition, if required.

Tenderers are reminded that they may rely on the resources of other entities in order to meet criteria and / or deliver elements of the contract requirements on condition that they can prove to the satisfaction of the client that they will have these resources at their disposal when necessary.

Therefore, a tenderer may consist of a grouping of any number of economic operators¹. Where a group come together in whatever form i.e. consortium, joint venture, subcontractors etc. to submit a Tender in response to this Request for Tender and regardless of the legal relationship between them, the Contracting Authority will deal with all matters relating to this competition through the entity (the “Lead Tenderer”) who will carry overall responsibility for the performance of the contract only, if successful irrespective of whether or not tasks are to be performed by a subcontractor or other consortium member.

The Lead Tenderer must clearly and comprehensively set out the name, title, telephone number, postal address, and email address of the nominated contact personnel authorised to represent the tenderer and to whom all communications shall be directed and accepted until this competition has been completed or terminated. Correspondence from any other person (including from any subcontractor) will not be accepted or responded to.

All Lead Tenderers relying on the capacity of other entities must:

- Identify in the TRD as the Lead Tenderer for the grouping with whom the Contracting Authority will communicate and with whom any subsequent contractual arrangements will be made if successful.
- Identify in the TRD the relevant third parties upon whose capacity the Lead Tenderer is relying upon to meet selection criteria and / or deliver elements of the contract and identify the relevant criteria and elements of the contract.
- Ensure the TRD including all subsections are completed and submitted for all relevant third parties upon whom the Lead Tenderer is relying on to meet criteria and / or deliver elements of the contract if awarded.
- In all tenders, the Lead Tenderer must nominate the reference contracts for inclusion in the assessment and selection process. The number of reference contracts for which details are to be provided will be nominated in the TRD of the Lead Tenderer. If more reference contracts are provided than required only the first listed reference contracts to the number specified (e.g. 3 reference contracts) will be considered. Where relying on the experience of others, at least one of the references provided should include reference to their relevant experience.

Where the tenderer consists of a grouping of economic operators and the tenderer is subsequently successful at tender stage, the Contracting Authority may require the members of the tender grouping to enter into a formal arrangement that can support the provision of collateral warranties to the Contracting Authority for the group members’ performance, etc. of the contract.

4.3 General, Legal and Financial Requirements

Tenderers are required to provide information on the following in the **Tender Response Document or ESPD** as directed. The criteria and rules outlined below are assessed on a pass/fail basis. Failure to comply with the requirements will result in the tender being considered inadmissible.

¹ ‘Economic operator’ means any natural or legal person or public entity or group of such persons and / or entities, including any temporary association of undertakings, which offers the execution of works and / or a work, the supply of products or the provision of services on the market; (Art 2(10) of Directive 2014/24/EU).

General Information – Pass/Fail

Provide contact and general information on the tendering organisation - company name, address and contact details for individual responsible for this tender and company overview as well as the role of the framework and likely percentage of the value for each sub-contractor, information on sub-contractors and consortium members if applicable.

Declarations – Pass/Fail

- Declarations relating to Bona Fides (as per Art. 57 of Directive 2014/24/EU as implemented by SI 2814 of May 2016) and compliance with relevant statutory obligations must be made in the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD). The ESPD can be completed electronically via the eESPD on eTenders (under “EO Administration”) or as a separate uploaded attachment with the tender response. Note that that ESPD must be signed by an authorised representative of the Economic Operator. An ESPD template is provided with this RFT and is available for download from eTenders should the Economic Operator choose to use the manual form rather than the eESPD on eTenders.
- Economic Operators must complete the Declaration regarding the International Procurement Instrument (2022/1031) and article 5K of Regulation 2022/576 on restrictive measures in the Context of Russian Actions in the Ukraine. Which is provided in the Tender Response Document.
- The Contracting Authority may decide to examine tenders before verifying the absence of exclusion grounds in Regulation 57 of the regulations (the “Exclusion Grounds”) and the fulfilment of the Selection Criteria.
However, notwithstanding anything contrary in this part, The Contracting Authority reserves the right to ask Tenderers at any moment during the Competition to submit any of the following for the purposes of verification of the status of the tenderer (including Prime Contractor and any Subcontractor).
(i) information concerning the Tenderer, and any proposed subcontractors, for the purposes of Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 (as amended by EU Regulation 2022/576 or any subsequent amendments to same) including, but not limited to, in respect of natural persons, copies of identity documents and, in respect of legal persons, a certificate or extract from the commercial register or other competent authority of the country in which the legal person is established.
(ii) and information concerning the origin of goods, if any, for the purposes of assessing compliance with Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 (as amended by EU Regulation 2022/576 or any subsequent amendments to same).
- If a Tenderer does not, upon request by the Contracting Authority, provide evidence which is considered by the Contracting Authority as sufficient to demonstrate (i) its fulfilment of the Selection Criteria (or any one of them) in accordance with this RFT and (ii) the absence of Exclusion Grounds, or its reliability despite the existence of a relevant Exclusion Ground and (iii) that it does not come within the category of prohibited economic operators identified in Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 of 31 July 2014 (as amended by EU Regulation 2022/576) and (iv) that the origin of goods, if any, are not subject to the prohibitions set out in Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 (as amended by EU Regulation 2022/576 or any subsequent amendments to same) then it shall be excluded from further participation in this Competition.
- If a Tenderer does not, upon request by the Contracting Authority, provide evidence which is considered by the Contracting Authority as sufficient to demonstrate (i) the fulfilment by any Subcontractor on whose capacity the Prime Contractor relies of the Selection Criteria (or any one of them) in accordance with this RFT and (ii) the absence of Exclusion Grounds in respect of any Subcontractor, or the reliability of any Subcontractor despite the existence of a relevant Exclusion Ground and (iii) that any proposed Subcontractor on whose capacity

the Tenderer relies (where the value of that subcontract exceeds 10% of the value of the Services Contract) does not come within the category of prohibited economic operators identified in Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 of 31 July 2014 (as amended by EU Regulation 2022/576) then, it shall be excluded from further participation in this Competition unless it replaces the Subcontractor with one which meets all relevant requirements of this RFT.	
Tax compliance, Financial Capacity and Insurances – Pass/Fail	
Tax compliance	Confirmation that the tenderer / all parties associated with the tenderer are fully tax compliant must be provided in the TRD.
Insurance	Confirmation that the following insurances will be held for the duration of the agreement must be provided in the TRD: • Employer's Liability - €13 million • Public Liability - €6.5 million • Professional Indemnity - €1 million
Turnover	Confirmation that the tendering party turnover exceeded €500,000 during each of the last three years or pro-rata if more recently established firms are tendering – however the firm must have been in existence for at least 6 months. Confirmation must be provided in the TRD and evidence will be required prior to the award of the framework agreement / any contract. In the case of an applicant being a grouping, this condition may be satisfied by the group members as a whole, or by reliance on the lead applicant. Where group members are relying on the lead applicant's financial capacity, self-declaration / evidence will only be required of the lead.

4.4 Technical Capacity Requirements

Tenderers are required to provide information in the Tender Response Document. The criteria and rules outlined below are assessed on a **pass/fail** basis. Failure to comply with the requirements will result in the tender being considered inadmissible.

Previous Contracts / Experience – Pass/Fail
Tenderers must provide information clearly demonstrating successful delivery of three (3) comparable projects within the past three (3) years (preferably in the Public Sector). A minimum two of the references must demonstrate provision of research and information management agency staff. The contracts referenced for consideration should provide comprehensive information to enable the Contracting Authority to determine their comparability to the requirements of this contract and to demonstrate the firm's skills, efficiency, experience and reliability in the relevant areas of expertise. Notes: • All fields in the TRD should be completed in full. In the event that the information requested on the value of contracts or identity of clients is considered confidential, tenderers must ensure that they provide sufficient information to allow the Contracting Authority to judge the similarity of these contracts to the services required.

- In completing the table for each reference project, Tenderers must provide sufficient information to allow the Contracting Authority to evaluate whether all of the requirements at above have been met and whether the services have been successfully delivered.
- Where the tenderer is a grouping relying on the resources of others to meet the previous experience requirement, one of the projects must be from the 3rd party identified in the TRD.
- Tenderers will note that they are to provide contact details for referees for each reference project. The Contracting Authority has the right to contact the referees to verify the information being provided, without further reference to the Tenderer. It is the responsibility of Tenderers to satisfy themselves that the nominated contact person is in a position to provide a reference if contacted by the Contracting Authority. Tenderers should note that the Contracting Authority may at its discretion contact all referees or referees for the successful Tenderers only. Tenderers must note that this is a pass/fail criterion and the Contracting Authority may deem a tender inadmissible based on the feedback received from the referees indicated in the submission, where applicable.

Agency Licence – Pass/Fail

Tenderers are required to provide evidence of being a licenced employment agency in accordance with the Employment Act 1971/evidence that the tenderer can secure such a licence by the schedule commencement date.

Required Personnel – Pass/Fail

Tenderers must demonstrate that they have at their disposal an appropriate number of suitably qualified resources across research, information management and corporate support areas.

5 AWARD CRITERIA

Only tenders that meet the Selection Criteria and are confirmed as valid and responsive to the specifications set out in this document will be evaluated against the award criteria. Tenderers should ensure that they have submitted sufficient relevant information to allow their tenders to be assessed under each of the award criteria set out below.

The framework will be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous compliant tender taking into account the following award criteria and weightings. Tenderers should note that the qualitative award criteria are assessed first.

Criterion A		Weighting	Maximum Marks	Minimum Marks Required 60%
Quality of Tenderers Recruitment Process		20%	2,000	1,200
Description	Tenderers must set out their approach to sourcing and delivering of personnel. Responses are to include but are not limited to: • Methods for attracting and maintaining a steady supply of relevant candidates. • Screening Process • Timeline for turnaround for submitting suitable candidates • Procedure for providing replacement staff at short notice, particularly if the resource in place is not suitable or becomes unavailable • Communication approach with agency staff placed on site to ensure they are effectively managed and supported • Proposals on how sick leave and absences are managed • Process around termination of placements.			
Criterion B		Weighting	Maximum Marks	Minimum Marks Required 60%
Account Management		20%	2,000	1,200
Description	Tenderers must demonstrate that experienced and qualified personnel will be assigned to deliver the service. Responses are to include but are not limited to: • Details of nominated Account Manager proposed for the assignment, including a CV and outline of why they are suitable to this role. • Account Manager's approach to managing the relationship with the HRB including service levels, escalation and formal complaints procedures,			

	monitoring and reporting against agreed KPIs. • Procedure for candidates to submit their timesheets and approval of same. • Invoicing Procedure noting the HRB invoicing requirements.		
Criterion C	Weighting	Maximum Marks	Minimum Marks Required 60%
Green Public Procurement	5%	500	300
Description	Tenderers must demonstrate how they as an organisation meet green public procurement requirements as an organisation and also in relation to provision of the service.		
Criterion D	Weighting	Maximum Marks	Minimum Marks Required 60%
Quality and Suitability of Personnel	30%	3,000	1,800
Description	Tenderers are requested to submit sample CVs with <u>personal details redacted</u> for the listed roles below. The role profiles are attached at Appendix 2. 1. Research Analyst role in National Health Information Systems Unit (Grade VI) 2. Research Officer in Evidence (Grade VII) 3. Project Officer in Research, Strategy and Funding (Grade VI) Three CVs should be submitted to cover each role. Any additional CVs over this total will be not reviewed and marked. Marks are allocated equally across each of the roles. The CVs submitted should be <u>appropriate</u> to the roles. If the Evaluation Team deem that a CV provided is not appropriate to the role, the CV will not be marked. It is anticipated that there may be some crossover between Candidates for each role. Tenderers must complete the table in the TRD outlining which CVs are provided as suitable for each role.		
Criterion E	Weighting	Maximum Marks	Minimum Marks 60%
Cost	25%	2,500	N/A

Description	Tenderers are required to complete the pricing schedule in the TRD. Tenderers must quote for the cost for one Grade VI agency staff at an annual salary of €58,477 for six months. • Please enter the cost in the highlighted cells in the TRD. Marks will be awarded against total cost excluding VAT. The figure quoted in the Pricing Schedule must be the best and final offer for the award of the contract. • Cost is to include a holiday charge for the agency staff. This should be built into the management fee upfront so that when an agency staff takes annual leave they are fully paid by the agency and the HRB are not invoiced for this. Holidays are to be taken pro-rata over the engagement. • As referenced in the RFT, the HRB will not be liable for any transfer or other fees payable should an agency staff later secure a permanent role in the HRB. This should be factored into the management fee.
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Tenderers should ensure in their tender submission that they provide detailed information in respect of all aspects of the contract award criteria as stated above. This will enable the awarding authority to assess fully the extent of their offers.

5.1 Methodology for Calculating the Cost Score

The following formula will be applied to the cost score:

The lowest cost tender that also meets all the minimum requirements of the qualitative award criteria will receive the maximum score achievable under this criterion. The scores of the other valid tenders will be calculated using the following formula:

Lowest Cost from a Bona Fide Tender	A
Maximum Marks available for Cost	B
Cost for the tender being evaluated	C
Formula employed	$\frac{A \times B}{C}$

5.2 Methodology for Calculating Scoring of Qualitative Criteria

Score	Meaning	Interpretation
90 – 100%	Excellent	Excellent response with very few or no weaknesses and exceeds requirements, and provides comprehensive, detailed, and convincing assurance that the Tenderer will deliver to an excellent standard.
80 – 89%	Very Good	A very good response that demonstrates real understanding and fully meets the requirements and significant assurance that the Tenderer will deliver to a very high standard.
70 – 79%	Good	A good response that demonstrates appropriate understanding and fully meets the requirements and appropriate assurance that the Tenderer will deliver to high standard.
65 – 69%	Satisfactory	A satisfactory response which demonstrates a reasonable understanding of requirements and gives reasonable assurance of delivery to a satisfactory standard.
60 – 64%	Acceptable	An acceptable response which demonstrates a reasonable understanding of requirements and gives reasonable assurance of delivery to an acceptable standard.
Less than 60% is unacceptable and considered ineligible from further consideration.		

Note: where there is a tie-break, the economic operator with the highest quality score will be awarded the quotation. In a case where the overall qualitative scores are identical the economic operator with the highest score on the highest weighted qualitative criterion will be awarded the quotation.

All information regarding the evaluation process or potential outcomes shall remain confidential until after the conclusion of the tender process.

5.3 Post Tender Clarification

At the discretion of the Contracting Authority, tenderers may be invited, in writing, to clarify certain aspects of their tender, particularly where information or documentation to be submitted appears to be incomplete or erroneous. However, all such requests will be made in full compliance with the principles of equal treatment and transparency and avoid any distortion of competition.

5.4 Verification

Award of contract/membership of the framework may be subject to attendance at a verification meeting. It would be essential that the key personnel assigned to this framework should be available and present at this meeting. If required, tenderers will be notified of the date, time, agenda and format for such meetings as soon as possible.

A visit to the Tenderer's premises may be required to clarify any questions or queries regarding the tender offer.

5.5 Clarification of Abnormally Low Tenders

If the Contracting Authority considers the tender submission to be commercially unsustainable or otherwise problematic considering the tendered price or any other financial matter (including proposed indicative hours), the tenderer shall be invited to provide clarification to the Contracting Authority in respect of all elements of the tender submission that the Contracting Authority deems relevant. Any failure to satisfactorily comply with such a request, or to satisfactorily address the Contracting Authority's concerns, may, at the discretion of the Contracting Authority, result in the elimination of the tender in question on the basis of it being considered abnormally low.

5.6 Right to Confirm Suitability

Tenderers should note that the Contracting Authority reserves the right to confirm that the financial and technical capacity of the tenderer is valid and unchanged prior to the establishment of the framework and the award of any contract.

6 INSTRUCTIONS FOR TENDERERS

6.1 Submission of Tenders

The Contracting Authority is using the Tender Postbox facility and tenders must be submitted electronically via the eTenders postbox facility on www.etenders.gov.ie only. Only Tenders submitted to the electronic postbox will be accepted. Tenders submitted by any other means (including but not limited to by email, fax, post or hand delivery) will **not** be accepted.

Tenderers must ensure that they give themselves enough time to upload and submit all required documentation before the closing date/time noting the use of the eTenders platform. Tenderers should consider the fact that upload speeds vary. In order to submit a response to the electronic post-box, please note that you must ensure you have submitted the response completely. It is advisable to familiarise yourself with the platform prior to the closing date.

Below we provide an overview of the key steps. Please note that the Contracting Authority take no responsibility for these steps being the totality of the steps required as different processes may require different actions.

If in doubt, please ensure you contact the eTenders helpdesk as follows:

Email: irish-eproc-helpdesk@eurodyn.com

Phone: +353-818001459

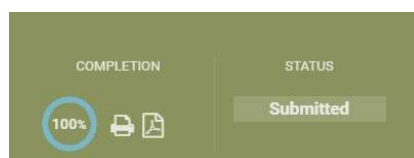
Accessing Documents

It is important to note that you must **ASSOCIATE** your company with this competition in the first instance. To do this you must do the following:

- (a) Log-in to the system
- (b) Locate the competition using the Advanced Search by Contracting Authority or Resource ID
- (c) Click on the hyperlink for the competition which will bring you to the CfT Workspace
- (d) In the Show CfT Menu for the competition click on the “Expression of Interest” in the drop-down menu
- (e) Complete the “Association with the CfT” tab.
- (f) This will then provide you with a link to “Tender” under the Show CfT Menu

Submitting your Response

In responding to a competition without an electronic ESPD, a number of steps are required. The final step involves clicking on a Submit button and receiving the following status:



If you do not receive a message similar to above and a confirmation email, you have not submitted your response.

Please note that the screen may say **OFFLINE**, this is a technical feature of eTenders and does not mean you cannot submit. Also please note you may see the percentage field also saying 100% before you submit, this still requires you to go through the submit button.

Please upload your response as a **ZIP FILE** to protect the integrity of the file names.

It is the responsibility of the Tenderer to ensure that their tender is complete and is uploaded in accordance with the instructions provided on eTenders prior to the deadline as per the front page.

6.2 Checklist for Submission of Tenders

Tenderers are advised to check that they have included the following items in their submission:

1. Tender Response Document
2. Appendix 1 – Agency Staff Protocol
3. Appendix 2 - Resource Profiles
4. Appendix 3 – Draft Framework Agreement Terms and Conditions
5. Appendix 4 – Draft Agency Contract
6. ESPD Template

6.3 Closing date for Tenders

The closing date for tender submission	as per etenders
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It is the responsibility of the tenderer to ensure that their tender is complete and is uploaded / submitted by the designated deadline.

6.4 Queries

The closing date for submitting queries	as per etenders
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All queries regarding this tender should be submitted through the messaging facility on www.etenders.gov.ie, including any omissions which would prevent tenderers from submitting a comprehensive tender. Please submit queries as soon as possible and before the query closing date. The Contracting Authority is not obliged to respond to questions received after this date.

In circulating responses, queries will be edited to avoid disclosing the identity of the querist and will be circulated to all parties who have expressed an interest in the procurement on the eTenders website.

6.5 Extension of Tender Period

The Contracting Authority reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to extend the closing date for receipt of tenders by giving notice in writing (by post or electronic means) to all parties who have expressed an interest in the notice via eTenders no later than six days before the original closing date.

6.6 Tender Validity Period

To allow sufficient time for Tender assessment a Tender Validity period of 6 months is required, this period commencing on the closing date by which the Tenders are to be returned.

6.7 Discrepancies between Documents

A pdf version of the Request for Tender has been made available on eTenders. This document will be considered as the primary source document in this procurement process, word versions of documents where they are provided are being made available to assist tenderers in responding to the tender competition. Where there is a discrepancy between a pdf version and a word version, the pdf version will take precedence. Tenderers are requested to notify the Contracting Authority immediately of any anomaly. Where applicable the Contracting Authority will issue amended versions.

6.8 Formatting of Tenders / Amending Tender Documents

Tenderers must ensure they use the Tender Response Document (TRD) when preparing their submission.

Tenderers are prohibited from amending any text or content of forms or declarations or templates provided as part of this tender competition in their tender responses, unless directed otherwise. Where amendments have been identified, the Contracting Authority may at its discretion eliminate the tenderer from further consideration. Likewise, failure to use the template documentation provided particularly in relation to costing / pricing may result in tenders being eliminated.

6.9 Collusive Tendering

If any Tendering Party is found to have, at any time, offered to give or to have agreed to offer or give to any person, any bribe, gift, gratuity, commission or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for taking or forbearing to take any action in relation to the obtaining of its Tenders, or for showing or forbearing to show any favour or disfavour to any person in relation to its Tenders, the bid submitted by such Tendering Party shall be automatically disqualified and the circumstances surrounding such action shall be referred to the appropriate authority.

6.10 Confidentiality

After the official opening of Tenders, information relating to the examination, clarification, evaluation and comparison of Tenders and recommendations will not be disclosed to tenderers or other persons not officially concerned with such process until the award decision with the successful Tenderer has been announced and in conformity with national laws.

Tenderers shall treat the details of all documents supplied to them in connection with this contract as private and confidential and shall not disclose the contents to a third party without the permission of the Contracting Authority.

Any effort by the Tenderer to influence the Contracting Authority or their staff in the process of examination, clarification, evaluation and comparison of Tenders and in decisions concerning the award of the contract may result in the rejection of that Tender.

6.11 Clarification of Tenders

The Contracting Authority is entitled, but not obliged, to seek clarification of tenders, including pricing breakdowns in the course of the evaluation process. No change in the price or substance of the Tender shall be sought, offered or permitted. To assist in finalising the tender evaluation, selected tenderers may be invited to attend clarification meetings with the Contracting Authority.

Tenderers will be responsible for any costs incurred by them in the event that they are required to attend clarification or other meetings or make a presentation of their proposals.

6.12 Correction of errors

Detailed pricing of all tenders will be examined for errors that might alter the tender pricing as determined from the figures on the Form of Tender and electronic versions of the tender (if applicable). In general, the following approach will be applied to manifest errors - where there is a discrepancy between the unit price and the total amount derived from the multiplication of the unit price and the quantity, the unit price as quoted will normally govern.

The amount stated in the tender form will be adjusted by the Contracting Authority in accordance with the above procedure and, with the agreement of the tenderer, shall be considered as binding upon the tenderer. Without prejudice to the above, a tenderer not accepting the correction of their tender as outlined may have their tender rejected.

Where the Total Quote function has been activated on eTenders and a discrepancy arises between the amount in the Total Quote box and the tender submission, the amount in the tender submission shall take precedence.

Once the tender submission deadline has expired, no new information can be introduced. This includes cost elements.

6.13 Change in the composition of a Tenderer

Where a change in composition of a tenderer arises, this must be notified in writing to the Contracting Authority and formally approved by them. Where the original party to the tender was critical to the tenderer meeting some or all selection criteria, any replacement party must meet or exceed the same selection criteria standard.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right, but is not obliged, to disqualify any Tenderer that makes any change to its composition after submission of a Tender.

6.14 Interference and Inducement to Purchase

Any effort by the tenderer to unduly influence the Contracting Authority, relevant agency personnel or any other relevant persons or bodies in the process of examination, clarification, evaluation and comparison of tenders and in decisions concerning the Award of Contract shall have their tender rejected. The presumptions (including as to any gift, consideration or advantage) and other provisions under the Criminal Justice Act 2018, and all other measures for the time being governing the subject-matter in any applicable jurisdiction, shall be applicable.

6.15 Conflict of Interest

Any conflict of interest involving a tenderer (or tenderers in the event of a consortium bid) must be fully disclosed to the Contracting Authority. Any registrable interest involving the tenderer and the Contracting Authority or employees of the Contracting Authority or their relatives must be fully disclosed in the tender submission or should be communicated to the Contracting Authority immediately upon such information becoming known to the tenderer, in the event of this information only coming to their notice after the submission of a bid and prior to the award of the contract. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may disqualify a tenderer or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict of interest comes to light.

6.16 Publicity

Tenderers shall not undertake (or permit to be undertaken) at any time, whether at this stage or after the award of the contract, any publicity activity with any section of the media in relation to this tender/agreement other than with the prior written consent of the Contracting Authority. Such consent shall extend to the content of any publicity. For the purposes of this paragraph, the word “media” includes (but is not limited to) radio, television, newspapers, trade and specialist press, the Internet and email, accessible by the public at large and the representatives of such media.

The Contracting Authority will have the right to publicise or otherwise disclose to any third-party information regarding this process and the agreement.

6.17 Right Not to Award

The Contracting Authority does not bind itself to accept the most economically advantageous tender or any tender. It also reserves the right to accept or reject in whole or in part any or all tenders received, and, in particular, to source the requirement with more than one provider.

The invitation to tender is issued in good faith; however, the Contracting Authority at its sole discretion shall not be obliged to award a contract or proceed to further stages in the procurement process and reserves the right to cancel the procurement process.

6.18 Notification of Tender Evaluations

All information regarding the evaluation process or potential outcomes shall remain confidential until after the conclusion of the tender process.

All tenderers will be informed of the outcome of their tenders following tender evaluation and any necessary clarifications.

Potential outcomes can be:

- Establishment of the Framework/Award of Contract
- Letter of Regret
- Decision not to proceed with the establishment of the Framework

6.19 Award Notices

Following the conclusion of the framework, an award notice will be dispatched to eTenders announcing the results of the competition.

6.20 Policy on Personal Debriefings

Based on the provision of the information to unsuccessful tenderers as outlined above and due to resourcing constraints, the Contracting Authority will not be offering individual debriefing meetings to unsuccessful bidders.

6.21 Copyright

Unless otherwise agreed, the Contracting Authority will have copyright ownership of any material developed for use by the Contracting Authority under the terms of this tender. The service provider may have a non-exclusive license to use such material but only for its own purposes (to be agreed with the successful tenderer).

6.22 Brand Names, etc.

Please note in relation to this tender document; where reference is made to a particular make, source, process, trademark, type or patent, that this is not to be regarded as a de facto requirement. In all such cases it should be understood that the reference in question is accompanied by the words "or equivalent".

6.23 Environmental Aspects

The Contracting Authority is committed to the principles of environmental management in its activities, and it encourages the implementation of sustainability principles in its procurement practices. Tenderers/contractors should make all reasonable efforts to minimise adverse environmental impact in the methods of service delivery and in materials used.

6.24 Knowledge and Skills Transfer

It will be a condition of the contract that opportunities for the transfer of skills and/or knowledge from the Tender/Tender's staff to the Contracting Authority staff will be availed of during the course of contracts under the framework agreement.

6.25 Currency and Payments

The currency in which all prices and rates shall be tendered, and which payments under the contract will be paid, shall be Euro (€). All prices and rates quoted should be exclusive of VAT, with the applicable rate of VAT clearly indicated.

A schedule of payments will be agreed with the successful tenderer and invoices shall be submitted in accordance with the terms agreed with the Contracting Authority.

6.26 Irish Legislation and Law

Tenderers should be aware that national legislation applies in other matters such as Employment, Working Hours, Official Secrets, Data Protection and Health and Safety. Tenderers must have regard to statutory terms relating to minimum pay and to legally binding industrial or sectoral agreements in the Contracting Authority tenders and in delivering contracts awarded to them. The contract(s) awarded on foot of this tender process will be governed by Irish law.

6.27 Anti-Competitive Conduct

Tenderers should take notice of the Competition Act 2002 (as amended, the “2002 Act”), which makes it a criminal offence for tenderers to collude on prices or any other aspects relating to this procurement competition.

6.28 Accessibility / Dignity at Work

The successful tenderer(s) shall comply with all relevant legislation relating to dignity at work. As a public body and employer, the Contracting Authority is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity for all personnel.

In line with the Disability Act 2005, accessibility requirements should be clearly stated in request for tenders / quotations where applicable. Under Section 27 of the Act the Contracting Authority is required to ensure that both the goods supplied, and services provided to it are accessible to persons with disabilities.

6.29 Withholding Tax

Where applicable, payments shall be subject to Irish ‘Professional Services Withholding Tax’ at the prevailing rate (currently at 20%) as laid down by the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland. Non-residents may be able to reclaim such deducted Tax from the Office of the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland, International Claims Section located currently at Government Buildings, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, Ireland (Tel: +353 (0) 67 63400).

6.30 Freedom of Information

All responses to this Request for Tender will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the written permission of the tenderer except insofar as is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the response or as may be required under law, including the Freedom of Information Act 2014, EU and Irish Government Procurement Procedures, or in response to questions, debates or other parliamentary procedures in or of the Oireachtas (the Irish Parliament).

Tenderers are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in response to this request for tenders should not be disclosed because of its sensitivity. However, any blanket or all-encompassing request for exemption from disclosure is not acceptable; tenderers must identify explicitly any such information and give relevant reasons for considering it to be economically sensitive or confidential in nature. If this is the case, tenderers should specify the information that is sensitive and the reasons for its sensitivity. The Contracting Authority cannot guarantee that any information provided by tenderers, either in response to this tender or in the course of any contract awarded as a result thereof, will not be released pursuant to the Contracting Authority's obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act 2014, or to those under EU and Irish Government Procurement rules. The Contracting Authority accepts no liability whatsoever in respect of any information provided which is subsequently released, or in respect of any consequential damage suffered as a result of such disclosure.

6.31 Late Payment

The Contracting Authority operates in accordance with EU Directive 2011/7/EU on combating Late Payment in commercial Transactions transposed into national legislation as S.I. 580 of 2012 and amended by S.I. No. 281 of 2016.

6.32 Data Protection

"Data Protection Laws" means all applicable national and EU data protection laws, regulations and guidelines including but not limited to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (the "General Data Protection Regulation"), the Data Protection Act, 2018 and any guidelines and codes of practice issued by the Data Protection Commission or other supervisory authority for data protection in Ireland from time to time.

The Contracting Authority will be a Controller (where Controller has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) in respect of any Personal Data (where Personal Data has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) required to be provided by the Tenderer in response to this Request for Tender.

The Tenderer, as Controller in respect of any Personal Data provided by it in its Tender, is required to confirm by way of statement in the "Declarations" section of the accompanying Tender Response Document that all Data Subjects (where Data Subject has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) whose Personal Data is provided by the Tenderer have consented to the processing of such Personal Data by the Tenderer, the Contracting Authority, the Evaluation Team and the supplier of the eTenders website, for the purposes of the participation of the Tenderer in this Competition or that the Tenderer otherwise has a legal basis for providing such Personal Data to the Contracting Authority for the purposes of its participation in this Competition.

6.33 Changes in Legislation

As a condition of award, it shall be the sole responsibility of the tenderer (in the event of success in this competition) to fulfil the obligations under the Contract.

6.34 International Procurement Instrument-IPI

The Contracting Authority would refer Tenderers in particular to the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2022/1031 on the access of third country economic operators, goods and services to the Union's public procurement and concession markets and procedures supporting negotiations on access of Union economic operators, goods and services to the public procurement and concession markets of third countries (International Procurement Instrument – IPI), and to their obligation to comply therewith. In particular, tenderers and candidates should note in Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2022/1031, the obligations for a Contracting Authority in the context of a procurement procedure where the EU Commission has adopted an IPI measure.

6.35 Responsibility of Successful Party

As a condition of award, it shall be the successful tenderer's sole responsibility to ensure they have taken account of all obligations under the Contract including supply chain and related risk factors.