

## LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear Sir/Madam

### **CABINET OFFICE CONTRACT FOR SCOPING AND PROJECT CONSULTANCY FOR THIRD SECTOR RESEARCH CENTRE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Your organisation, along with others, is invited to bid for the Cabinet Office's requirement for a scoping report and project consultancy to support commissioning of a third sector research centre.
2. The following documents provide the background and framework of the requirement:
  - i. The Specification (Annex A)
  - ii. Specific Issues for scoping report (Annex B)
  - ii. Cabinet Office Conditions of Contract (Annex C)
  - iii. Formal Declaration of Offer (Annex D)
3. None of the documents may be altered by the tenderer. Any modification which the tenderer thinks is necessary is to be detailed in a separate letter accompanying the tender.
4. Tenderers are encouraged to be innovative and forward thinking when preparing their bids and the Cabinet Office will consider all such suggestions and methods that provide a more efficient and cost effective solution.
5. The tendering exercise is being co-ordinated by the Cabinet Office, Office of the Third Sector (OTS). Questions seeking clarification of the nature of the work, or the interpretation of the tender documents, should be addressed, in writing, to Nick Starkey, Research Manager, Office of the Third Sector, 35 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BQ, or to [mark.johnson@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mark.johnson@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk).
6. Those intending to submit a tender are asked to register their interest by email with Mark Johnson so that responses to any requests for clarification and any updates may be circulated to all.

## **DATE FOR RETURN OF TENDER**

7. The closing time and date for the submission of tenders is **noon on Friday 12 October 2007**. It is the responsibility of tenderers to ensure that their tender is delivered not later than the appointed time. The Cabinet Office does not undertake to consider tenders received after that time unless clear evidence of posting is available (ie clear post mark and/or certificate of posting).
8. **Late tenders franked with the firm's own franking machine will automatically be rejected.** Any request for an extension of the period of tendering must be received at least 4 working days before the due date for return, but no undertaking can be given that an extension will be granted.
9. Four copies of the tender document should be submitted, in plain packaging, to Nick Starkey, Research Manager, Office of the Third Sector, 35 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BQ.
10. Tenders may not be considered if the complete information called for is not given at the time of tendering.

## **TENDER DETAILS**

11. In addition to your proposals, the details that we require from you in the tender are:
  - a. Understanding of the policy context and the purpose and scope of the research requirements.
  - b. Proposals for conducting the work.
  - c. Any potential conflicts of interest.
  - d. The names and relevant experience (including CVs) of the researchers involved, the number of days they will spend on the project and their responsibilities within it.
  - e. A timetable.
  - f. Details of costs.

## **PRICE**

12. As explained in the specification, we wish to commission up to 30 days work, to be charged at a fixed day rate. Tenderers should submit their day rate, as well as an estimate of what expenses they might expect to incur.

## **EVALUATION OF TENDERS**

13. The tenders will be evaluated and tenderers informed of the Cabinet Office's decision. As part of the evaluation process we intend interviewing shortlisted candidates on **Friday 19 October**.
14. The criteria by which tenders will be evaluated to determine the most economically advantageous offer are as follows:
  - a. Track record of proven expertise and experience covering the following:
    - Academic institutions
    - Centres of excellence or comparable research centres in particular
    - The third sector
    - A range of research methods or disciplines relevant to a centre of this nature
    - Dissemination, knowledge transfer and stakeholder engagement.
  - b. Understanding of the policy context and requirements and development of appropriate proposals;
  - c. Ability to provide outputs which directly support the preparation of an invitation to tender for the third sector research centre;
  - d. Ability to meet the timescale;
  - e. Value for money; and
  - f. Overall quality of the proposal.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF TENDERS**

15. Please note the following requirements, any breach of which will invalidate your tender:
  - i. You must not tell anyone else, even approximately, what your tender prices are or will be, before the time limit for delivery of tenders. The only exception is if you need an insurance quotation to calculate your tender prices: you may give your insurance company or brokers any essential information they ask for, so long as you do so in strict confidence.
  - ii. You must not try to obtain any information about anyone else's tender or proposed tender before the time limit for delivery of tenders.

## **CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT**

16. **The Contract will be under the standard terms and conditions of the Cabinet Office, as attached at Annex C. In submitting their bids Tenderers should confirm that they will accept these terms and conditions.** Exceptionally if a tenderer wishes to propose alternative Terms and Conditions these must be documented in full and attached to the Declaration of Offer form.
17. The contract will be awarded and project initiation meeting held during the week beginning 22 October 2007, and the final report should be submitted on **Friday 23 November**. Successful candidates must also attend a stakeholder consultation event, probably in November - the date for this meeting will be confirmed shortly and forwarded to those who register their interest for this work.

### **SUBMISSION OF BIDS**

18. The tender shall be made in accordance with the **Declaration of Offer** at Annex D. It should be signed by the tenderer and submitted with any supporting documents the tenderer may wish to send. Tenderers not accompanied by the attached Declaration of Offer will not be considered.
19. The Cabinet Office does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender, and reserves the right to accept a portion of any tender, unless the tenderer expressly stipulates otherwise on his tender. The Cabinet Office is not liable for any costs or expenses you may incur in preparing your tender.

### **INFORMATION SUPPLIED**

20. Information supplied by the Cabinet Office is supplied for general guidance in the preparation of the tenders. Tenderers must satisfy themselves by their own investigations with regard to the accuracy of any such information. No responsibility is accepted by the Cabinet Office for any inaccurate information obtained by tenderers.
21. All information supplied by the Cabinet Office in connection with this invitation shall be regarded as confidential, and all documents are and shall remain the property of the Cabinet Office and must be returned on demand.

## **POLICY STATEMENT ON THE USE OF EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS**

22. It is Cabinet Office policy to employ external consultants where they can contribute to the achievement of the Department's key business objectives but only where:

the consultants offer:

- skills or resources unavailable within the Department; and
- value for money: and

the Department:

- has clearly defined the goal to be achieved from the use of consultants;
- is committed to action on the outputs of the assignment; and
- has the capacity to manage the assignment effectively to ensure that optimum benefits are realised.