



# **SBRI: Dynamic Resource Optimisation – NIAS [5528995]**

## *Document 01:* **INVITATION TO TENDER**

2024-25

Document 01:	<b>INVITATION TO TENDER</b>
	<b>This Invitation to Tender document describes the SBRI competition and how tenderers may apply.</b> Particular attention should be given to key dates set out, as applications after the tender deadline cannot be considered.



## 1. Background and Invitation

This invitation is made subject to the terms within the documentation available to download on eTendersNI. Tenders must be submitted in the prescribed manner before:

**15:00 on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

This Phase I competition has a maximum budget of £300,000.00 (**exclusive of vat**). It is anticipated that a maximum of 3 tenderers will be selected following the Tender Evaluation; each will receive an amount in accordance with their bid but subject to a maximum amount per tenderer of £100,000.00 (**exclusive of VAT**). To be eligible for selection, tenderers must submit a bid NOT exceeding £100,000.00 and pass all evaluation steps detailed in this document.

The Authority reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to commission further phases under this SBRI procurement from any or all of the contractors appointed under Phase I.

Prospective tenderers should ensure that they read the competition documents accompanying this Invitation to Tender. These are:

- Document 02: Competition Brief
- Document 03: Application Guidance Notes
- Document 04: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Document 05: SBRI Sample Contract
- Document 06: SBRI Final Report template (*for information only*)
- Document 07: SBRI Monthly Report template (*for information only*)
- Document 08: SBRI Finance Schedule template
- Document 09: SBRI Project Plan – Milestone Schedule

Tenderers may seek clarification in relation to this competition where they consider any part of the documentation or other aspect of the procurement process to be unclear. All clarification questions must be communicated through the secure clarifications function within the CfT Menu on eTendersNI.

The deadline for receipt of clarification requests is **15:00 on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024**.

Responses to requests for clarification will be communicated by the Authority to all tenderers through the messaging portal on eTendersNI. The identity of the tenderer will not be disclosed. Where a tenderer believes that a clarification request is confidential in nature, the request should clearly identify that the tenderer wishes the response to be kept confidential and not communicated to all tenderers. Clarification responses shall become part of the tender documentation and shall be treated as such.

Should a tenderer encounter any difficulties with this process, assistance can be accessed by contacting the eTendersNI helpdesk on 0800 240 4545 or email [ni-eproc-helpdesk@eurodyn.com](mailto:ni-eproc-helpdesk@eurodyn.com).

## 2. Introduction to SBRI

The Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) is a pre-commercial procurement model promoted by Innovate UK, which enables public sector bodies to connect with technology organisations in order to stimulate the development of innovative solutions to specific public sector challenges and needs. SBRI is appropriate when such solutions are not already available in the market.

SBRI aims to use the power of government procurement to accelerate technology development, thereby supporting projects through the stages of feasibility and prototyping, which are typically hard to fund commercially in the open market. SBRI offers an excellent opportunity for businesses, especially early stage companies, to develop and demonstrate technology, supported by an intelligent lead customer.

SBRI competitions have a three phase structure:

- *Phase I* is intended to show the technical feasibility and commercial viability of the proposed concept;
- *Phase II* is intended to develop and evaluate prototypes or demonstrators from the more promising technologies identified in Phase I through feasibility trialling; and
- *Phase III* allows for a period of extended testing for the most promising potential solutions, where this is desirable.

At Phase I a number of tenderers are selected by an open competition process to develop their solutions to the specific needs identified by the Contracting Authority. Development work within Phase I is funded up to 100% of justified cost or to a stated maximum value. All, or a subset only, of these contractors may be selected to proceed to later phases at the Authority's discretion based on agreed objective selection criteria and budget availability.

Contractors retain the Intellectual Property generated from the project, with certain rights of use retained by the Contracting Authority.

At the conclusion of the SBRI contract, or at any other time, the Contracting Authority may decide to procure the solution(s) developed or similar solution(s) from other providers - but there is no obligation to do so. If a solution is to be procured, this will constitute a separate competition under normal public procurement rules and other potential suppliers on the open market will be free to compete for the business.

## 3. Terms of Invitation

The Authority makes this open invitation to tender in good faith, without prejudice to its rights and strictly on the terms set out within the tender documentation, whereby the Authority:

- reserves the right, during the application period, to make changes to the tender documentation, which changes shall be accepted by the applicant without reservation;
- shall regard quantities estimated in the Competition Brief as estimates provided solely for indicative purposes and shall not be bound by such;
- shall not accept any amendments to the contents of any document issued by it as part of this procurement process;
- shall not be responsible for, or pay for, any expenses or losses that may be incurred by any applicant in preparing their application. It is the responsibility of applicants to obtain for themselves, at their own expense, any additional information necessary for the preparation of their application;
- shall not consider or respond to clarification questions received after the deadline for questions to be submitted (see Key Dates);
- requires all tenders to be written in English and prices quoted to be in Sterling, to 2 decimal places and **exclusive of VAT**;
- does not accept responsibility for transmission delays encountered by applicants for whatever reason;
- reserves the right to require any applicant to provide additional information supplementing or clarifying any of the information provided in response to the requests set out in this tender. The Authority may also seek independent financial and market advice to validate information declared, or to assist in the evaluation of the tender;
- Tenderers shall not make any assumptions that the Authority has any prior knowledge of their organisation. Tenders will be evaluated solely on the information provided within the response;
- shall announce the outcome of the procurement only by way of written instruction to applicants;
- shall not permit applicants, or any representative thereof, to be present when the tenders are opened;
- may reject any application where the applicant fails to provide the required information, make a satisfactory response to any question, or supply documentation referred to in responses, within the specified timescale. In the event that none of the applications are deemed satisfactory, the Authority reserves the right to terminate the SBRI competition and where appropriate, to re-advertise at a later date;
- shall not consider applications received after the tender deadline (see Key Dates);



- will afford applicants an opportunity to confirm or withdraw their offer in instances where examination of applications reveals errors or discrepancies which would affect the figure(s) in an otherwise successful application. In such cases, affected applicants will be given details of the errors and discrepancies found;
- reserves the right to invite some or all tenderers to a presentation as part of the assessment process. The presentation shall be used to seek clarification on all or part of the submission;
- reserves the right not to award a contract to any applicant under this process; and
- requires successful applicants to enter into a formal contract with the Authority, which shall incorporate the Terms & Conditions of Contract, Competition Brief, Invitation to Tender, Information and Instructions to Applicants, Clarification Responses, completed online application, including Finance Schedule & Project Plan and such other contract documents as may be relevant. The said formal Contract shall be executed as a Deed.
- Requires successful applicants to complete a 'wet signature' contract with the Authority following the completion of the award on eTendersNI.

### **Freedom of information**

In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FoIA'), all information submitted to the Authority may be disclosed in response to a request made pursuant to the FoIA.

In respect of any information submitted by an applicant that the applicant considers commercially sensitive, the applicant should include the following information as an annex within the completed application:

- clearly identify such information as commercially sensitive;
- explain the potential implications of disclosure of such information; and
- provide an estimate of the period of time during which the applicant believes that such information will remain commercially sensitive

Where an applicant identifies information as commercially sensitive, the Authority will endeavour to maintain confidentiality. Applicants should note however that even where information is identified as commercially sensitive the Authority might be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA. Accordingly, the Authority cannot guarantee that any information marked 'commercially sensitive' will not be disclosed.

### **SBRI conditions**

By applying, applicants are consenting to the terms and conditions contained in **Document 05: SBRI Sample Contract**.

Applications must have at least 50% of the contract value attributed directly and exclusively for R&D Services.

R&D can cover activities such as solution exploration and design, prototyping, up to the original development of a limited by volume of first products or services in the form of a test series.

Original development of a first product or service may include limited production or supply in order to incorporate the results of feasibility testing and to demonstrate that the product or service is suitable for production or supply in quantity to acceptable quality standards.

R&D does not include commercial development activities such as quantity production, supply to establish commercial viability or to recover R&D costs, integration, customisation, incremental adaptations and improvements to existing products or processes

## 4. Application process

Prospective tenderers are advised to:

- access and read all of the competition documents from the eTenderNI website
- register their company on eTendersNI at <https://etendersni.gov.uk/>
- download all the tender documentation from the Cft menu for this competition within eTendersNI
- read the **Document\_02: Competition Brief**, which describes the background, challenge and expected outcomes of the project;
- read the **Document\_03: Application Guidance Notes**, which explains how to apply in the manner required;
- read the other competition documents, including **Document\_04: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) & Document\_05: Sample Contract**
- submit any queries or requests for clarification in line with the process outlined above;
- avail of the opportunity to watch the competition information webinar event (if desired) which is available to download from the competition website alongside the Cft documents
- complete **Document\_08: SBRI Finance Schedule** and **Document\_09: SBRI Project Plan – Milestone Schedule** and upload the response alongside your Eligibility & Technical Responses on eTendersNI in line with the instructions held within.

## 5. Submission of tender

This tender process is being carried out electronically via the eTendersNI portal. In order to participate in this competition, please ensure you are registered as a company, or an individual, on the eTendersNI system, available at the following address:

<https://etendersni.gov.uk/epps/prepareRegisterEOOrg.do?registerEO=true>

Please note, an important element of the registration process is to supply your Dun & Bradstreet D-U-N-S® number. This can be obtained through <https://www.dnb.co.uk/duns-number/lookup/request-a-duns-number.html>.

The application must be completed as directed and returned via the eTendersNI etendering system.  
**Posted, telephoned, faxed or emailed tenders will not be accepted.**



The application may be uploaded at any time before the tender submission deadline set out in the Key Dates section of this document. Applications may also be retracted and re-submitted at any time before this deadline. The Authority will not have access to tender responses until the deadline has passed.

The application must be fully uploaded (“published”) on the eTendersNI system no later than the tender submission deadline. It will not be possible to submit a response after this time. When uploading an application, applicants should be aware of the speed of their internet connection, their system configuration and the volume of general web traffic that may impact on the time required to complete the transaction.

If you experience difficulties with the system, please contact the helpdesk on **0800 240 4545** or email [ni-eproc-helpdesk@eurodyn.com](mailto:ni-eproc-helpdesk@eurodyn.com). Please **do not wait** until near the tender submission deadline to do so.

When submitting their application, applicants should ensure that:

- Where attachments are utilised, the section number, section title and question number to which it relates should be listed on your attachment. Only information relevant to that particular question should be uploaded;
- each attachment is saved once uploaded (a pop-up reminder will appear);
- the entire submission has been uploaded correctly, including attachments;
- the submission has been ‘published’ on the system. It is important to regularly save your submission and ensure all work is saved prior to publishing.



## 6. Evaluation Methodology & Marking Scheme

Outlined below is the evaluation methodology and the marking scheme in terms of scoring and weightings that will be applied to the tender.

The Contract Adjudication Group (CAG) will evaluate the tender submissions. The tender contains three (3) Envelopes as listed below, and these are referred to in the relevant steps of the Evaluation Process:

- **Eligibility Envelope**  
All sections in the Eligibility Envelope are compulsory and must be answered, failure to answer these questions may result in your tender being eliminated.
- **Technical Envelope**  
Section 2 and Section 3 of the Technical Envelope contain the award criteria questions; each question requires a full written response.  
**Please also complete and attach D09 SBRI Project Plan – Milestone Schedule as this forms part of the Technical Envelope.**
- **Financial Envelope**  
The Financial Envelope has one section, **please complete and attach D08 SBRI Financial Schedule as requested.**

This tender will be checked and evaluated as detailed in the following steps of the Evaluation Process.

### Evaluation Process Steps

#### Step 1 – Compliance Checks

There are a number of compliance checks that will be carried out as follows:

- 1) All tender submissions will be checked to ensure that each tender is compliant in that it has been submitted in accordance with the Tender Instructions as detailed in the Eligibility Envelope and with all notes as stated within the various envelopes.
- 2) Tenderers must submit a completed SBRI Financial Schedule, completed as per the instructions and the bid price for Phase I **must NOT exceed £100,000.00 (excluding VAT) and the payment schedule is expected to set out the monthly profile of payments.**
- 3) Tenderers must submit a completed SBRI Project Plan – Milestone Schedule, completed as per the instructions and is expected to set out delivery dates for each milestone throughout the project
- 4) Tenderers must respond with a YES response in the Eligibility Envelope Section 9, Q9.1.



Tenderers who have met all of the compliance checks will have their tender progressed within the Evaluation Process. If a tenderer fails a Compliance Check they may have their tender deemed as non-compliant and may have their tender rejected.

### **Step 2 Award Criteria**

The Technical Envelope contains a number of Award Criteria questions, which are marked on the basis of quality of response.

**Table 1 – Award Criteria Weighting**

<b>Award Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
<b>Quality</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Technical Envelope – Section 2 – Q2.1 to Q2.3 &amp; Section 3 – Q3.1 to Q3.4</b>	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Step 2.1 – Technical Envelope – Section 2 & Section 3**

Each Award Criteria Question requires a full written response in the text box for each question on eTendersNI and will be weighted and scored as detailed below.

**The assessment criteria are shown in the following table:**

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Marks Available</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Score (0-5)</b>
<b><u>SECTION 2: INNOVATION AND COMMERCIALISATION</u></b>			
Q.2.1 Please explain clearly how your proposed Phase I solution meets the requirements of the Brief, given your understanding of Service User, Carer and Health and Social Care staff needs.	5	20	
Q.2.2 Please explain how your solution is innovative and how innovative your concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies are for this area. This should include details of market analysis, and set out why this approach is innovative.	5	20	
Q.2.3 Please explain how you intend to ensure that your proposed Phase I solution will have commercial potential, and how you intend to develop this to be a marketable product, process or service within HSC NI and wider healthcare markets.	5	20	

<b>SECTION 3: PROJECT MANAGEMENT</b>			
Q.3.1 Please explain how you, the tenderer, and any sub-contractor(s) have the right skills and experience to deliver the intended benefits. If you are intending to use sub-contractors please set out clearly the respective roles of the team members.	5	10	
Q.3.2 Please explain how the Phase I project will be managed. Include reference to the project planning, financial submission, management and approach. The proposal should set out the key deliverables and milestones in a project plan, with explanation as to how you will ensure they are achieved on target.	5	10	
Q.3.3 Please explain the approach you will adopt for feasibility trials including ensuring your technology will work effectively and safely when issued to participants. Tenderers should also provide details in their response on the progress of all governance requirements including GDPR, Cyber security and their ethical approval application, and provide information (i) as to the expected timeframe of these approvals and (ii) the earliest date your proposal will start to recruit participants.	5	10	
Q.3.4 Please explain the project risks (e.g. financial, staffing or environmental risks) that have been identified and explain how the risk will be mitigated and managed.	5	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Each of these 7 Award Criteria questions in this Envelope has a maximum of 5 marks available, and are weighted as shown above. The Assessors for this phase will evaluate your responses and determine a score out of 5 for each question, utilising the Award Criteria and Marking Scheme below.

**Award Criteria Marking Scheme**

<b>Mark</b>	<b>Description</b>
0	Failed to address the question asked.
1	An unacceptable response to the question with serious reservations. Limited detail of the methodology to be applied.
2	A response to the question with reservations. Lacks convincing detail.
4	Good response to the question and but lacks sufficient detail to award a higher mark.
5	Excellent response that fully answers the question with a detailed response and solution. Indicates an excellent response with detailed supporting evidence and no weaknesses.

**Please Note: there is no score of 3 in this table**



Assessors will then calculate your weighted score for each question. Your weighted score for each question will be totalled to give a mark out of 100%.

Pass Mark % –

A minimum pass mark of 50% out of 100% has been set and only tenderers whose percentage score for Quality (Step 2.1) that either meets or exceeds this % pass mark will progress in the Tender Evaluation. Tenderers who fail to meet or exceed the % pass mark will not progress any further in the Tender Evaluation.

**D09 SBRI Project Plan - Milestone Schedule**

**Tenders must complete and attach D09 SBRI Project Plan – Milestone Schedule in this section. Failure to do so will result in your bid being deemed as non-compliant.**

Step 3 - Award

Following the completion of Step 2.1, tenders will be ranked from highest to lowest based on their percentage (%) weighted score for quality. The highest ranked Tenderer/s following the completion of Step 2.1 will be awarded the Phase I contract.

## 7. Key Dates

The procurement timetable for this competition is shown below. Please note the deadline for applications below. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

Key Dates	
<b>Information Webinar</b>	<b>Published alongside Tender Documentation</b>
<b>Tender Advertisement</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
<b>Deadline for Clarification Requests</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
<b>Tender Deadline</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
<b>Tender Evaluation</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>
<b>Contract Award</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>
<b>Implementation Meeting (Online)</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>
<b>Wet Signature Contracts signed and returned no later than</b>	<b>12:00, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>
<b>Phase I Commencement Date</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> November 2024</b>
<b>Phase I Launch Event (Online)</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b>
<b>Successful applicants will be advised promptly and will be expected to mobilise rapidly. It is important that Phase I projects start soon after the contract has been issued so that all projects commissioned can proceed without delay.</b>	
<b>Final Review Meeting</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> April 2025</b>



<b>Phase I Contracts Complete</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> April 2025</b>
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**\*All dates may be subject to change**