

**Essex County Council**

**Request for Quotation (RFQ) Specification**

**[INSERT PROJECT TITLE HERE]**

**Research RFQ Number: xxxx**

**[Please email your complete RFQ Specification document to the R&CI team for logging. They will then provide you with a Research RFQ Number.]**

**[INSERT DATE HERE]**

**Please complete in full and return by xx on xx/xx/2020 to xxxxx@essex.gov.uk**

**Please note that all communications shall be conducted via the Authority’s secure e-mail service E-gress.**

**Contents (amend page numbers and contents accordingly once finalised)**

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**Please review all text in red and amend/delete accordingly   
throughout this document.**

**This document is a template which should be amended with details for your project, and sent to providers.**

This document should be sent to a minimum of 5 providers (if there are reasons this is not possible – e.g. the work is very specialised, you will need authorisation to proceed by contacting [procurement.processes@essex.gov.uk](mailto:procurement.processes@essex.gov.uk)).

**Additional guidance**

In addition to setting a deadline for responses from providers, it is also helpful to set a **deadline for clarification questions**. Unless stated as confidential, responses to questions should be shared with all providers who received the RFQ Specification, to ensure a fair process.

Questions should be generalised to ensure provider anonymity. If the question is confidential, respond directly to the provider and log for your records. If the question is private but the response would aid all providers and is relevant, it is advisable to highlight this to the provider and ask if they would like to retract the question, or obtain their agreement to disclose the question anonymised with the response from ECC.

If the question is retracted, you should keep a record of the question and no response is sent. If it is agreed it can be disclosed, generalise the question and response and share with all providers.

**[Insert project title here]**

* 1. **Request for Quotation – guidance and instructions**

Essex County Council invites you to submit a quotation for this requirement by email.

This RFQ comprises:

* RFQ guidance and instructions
* Specification template
* Pricing

In consideration of the opportunity to participate in email RFQ’s held and conducted by Essex County Council (“Authority”), your company ("Invitee") agrees to the following terms and conditions:  
  
**A.** The Authority reserves the right to amend, modify or withdraw the email RFQ. The Authority reserves the right to accept or reject all or part of your proposal. The Authority is not liable for any costs incurred by the Invitee in the preparation, presentation, or any other aspect of the Invitee's bid. The Authority will not reimburse any expense incurred by you in preparing your bid. Invitees take part in this e-mail RFQ entirely at their own risk and cost.  
  
**B**. All quotes which the Invitee submits through the email RFQ are legally valid quotations without qualification, except for data entry errors. All rates and prices quoted must exclude VAT and must be in sterling.

**C**. The Invitee shall keep the email RFQ content, other confidential materials provided by the Site and/or the Authority, and all bids provided by the Invitee or another participating organisation in confidence and shall not disclose the foregoing to any third party.   
  
**D**. The Invitee should ensure that they read and digest all of the required actions and appropriate deadlines and any subsequent communications.

**E**. All communications, enquiries, questions or requests for clarification by the Invitee should be addressed in writing to the e-mail on the front page of this RFQ document. The Invitee should note that the Authority will not respond to any enquiry, question or request not submitted in this manner.   
  
**F**. The terms and conditions of this element shall survive completion of the email RFQ.

**G**. Quotations for part or parts only of the service or for different standards or frequencies of service or made subject to alternative or additional terms or conditions may be rejected, or may be rejected for the reasons of such alterations or additions only.   
 **H.** Invitees are expected to keep the RFQ quotation valid for acceptance for a period of 120 days from the RFQ closing date.

If the Invitee has any questions on the RFQ then you will need to e-mail ECC to clarify and respond to your question.

Please note that any request to vary the terms of the contract including insurances must be raised by way of clarification. The Authority will not negotiate the terms of the Agreement after contract award.

The Invitee should be aware that this RFQ is based on a standard template that has been customised for this particular requirement.

1. **Research specification**

The requirements for this specification are set out below. Please read the document in full before completing your quotation.

**[Insert your specification requirements here – the headings outlined below are suggestions of what to include. Please amend/delete text in red accordingly and tailor requirements to your specific project, before sending on to providers].**

The section will take you through the following areas of developing your provider project specification. A good research specification (sometimes also called a research brief) should include all of the following:

* 1. **Title**

This notifies the reader of the focus of the project.

* 1. **Summary**

Use this section to set out the nature of the issue and the project specification to the provider. The provider should be able to use the summary to decide whether it would be appropriate for them to bid for your work. Make sure you cover:

* A clear and specific description of the problem, explaining why research is needed
* A short summary of your objectives
* Any mandatory services required e.g. defining methodology sought or particular project outputs
* Who the customer for the work is (e.g. are multiple central departments going to use the findings?)
* Expected project length
  1. **Background to the issue**

Use this section to provide detailed information on the background to the research, service or campaign.

Make sure you cover:

* Outline the issue the project relates to
* Explain who you are as a customer - don’t assume the provider knows your department/ organisation
* Set out any campaign or policy information the supplier needs to understand
* Provide data, existing research and any useful links
  1. **Research objectives**

What is the aim of the research? This should be clear-cut, detailing the overall policy or

communications objective plus a bullet point list of specific objectives. If you already have SMART objectives you should include these here.

* 1. **Target participant group**

Detail of the audience or population to be targeted by the research. This information will help providers determine an appropriate methodology for sampling and data collection. The target required needs to be unambiguous.

Make sure you include:

* Any data you have on target population size
* Current insight, including segmentations, focus group work etc.
* Sample size of named stakeholders or influencers and whether you have contact details for them, if relevant
  1. **Suggested approach and analysis**

Use this section to explain your proposed approach (if you have one). If you do have an existing approach you should be very clear where/if you are seeking new ideas. The project specification should encourage providers to problem solve rather than being prescriptive in its strategy. You should be clear in this case that you wish the supplier to develop the approach and what it needs to consider in doing so.

Make a clear statement of the type and complexity of analysis needed. For quantitative data, stipulate what kind of cross-tabulation headings and statistics will be needed. The researcher will need these details to formulate the research design (sample size and type) and determine the resources that will be required.

Be sure to specify requirements for sub-contracting if you have any.

* 1. **Outputs**

The deliverables required – such as data tables, reports, summaries and presentations of the research findings. Detail if interim reports are necessary.

* 1. **Liaison arrangements**

The requirements for contact and liaison throughout the research project. Is there a team or advisory group the researcher will need to meet? What are the envisaged frequency, type and reporting details required?

* 1. **Timings**

Give dates for awarding the contract, completion of the research – and any interim deadlines. This will help in the planning of what is feasible. e.g. the successful agency will be notified by [date]. A project set-up meeting is scheduled at [department] for [date]. We require the research to be complete and reported by [date].

* + 1. **Budget**

A guide that will allow the researcher to work out what is possible within the money available. A guideline budget also results in competitive proposals that can be judged on equal terms.

You should specify requirements around breakdown of costs – as a minimum, ask for costs for each research phase to be outlined (e.g. cost for project set-up, fieldwork period, reporting/deliverables).

* + 1. **Form of proposal**

Details on requirements for how the proposal should be presented. E.g. a word limit or maximum

number of pages for each section, font type/size.

*[End of specification requirements].*

**3 Evaluation criteria**

This guidance is intended to provide an **example evaluation criteria** for use with evaluating proposals from providers.

This includes questions about requirements which the providers bidding for the research should address, with proposed weightings and minimum scores required to pass each section.

**Please note these criteria are just suggestions for requirements – questions and weightings should be tailored to your specific project. Please amend/delete text in red before sending this document to providers.**

All research proposals will be evaluated using an **80% quality / 20% cost** weighting criteria.

*(If an alternative weighting is preferred, please contact:* [*procurement.processes@essex.gov.uk*](mailto:procurement.processes@essex.gov.uk) *stating your reasons for this and requesting authorisation to use a different criteria).*

**Quality Evaluation Criteria**

Providers are to note the quality evaluation table below. If you score a 0 or 1 on any question you will fail. ECC will not consider your response any further.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 0 | Non-compliant, fails to satisfy specified requirements. |
| 1 | Marginally adequate, does not satisfy all requirements, successful completion uncertain, concerns regarding competence or capacity and ability to successfully fulfil the contract requirements. |
| 2 | Acceptable and mainly compliant, generally meets the requirements except for minor aspects and shortcomings, successful completion likely. |
| 3 | Satisfies all requirements, average, acceptable and compliant; successful completion highly probable, no shortcomings apparent. |
| 4 | Very good, negligible risk of failure; satisfies the selection criteria in all respects. Highly competent and above average. |
| 5 | Superior, beyond expectations; offers an excellent level of performance which exceeds notional requirements; represents industry best practice. |

**Requirement Specific Questions**

**3.1 Research design**

**Please provide a detailed proposal outlining how you will design and deliver the research/evaluation, including an explanation of the rationale for your approach.**

**It is expected that this will include – but is not limited to – detail related to how you will:**

* **Design the research methodology/evaluation framework**
* **Design and test (as appropriate) the range of research materials to be used during the research/evaluation**
* **Design the sample of participants to be recruited to the research/trial, recruit participants/support ECC with participant recruitment/engagement and maximise response/participation**
* **Collect data (including from whom/how many people, duration of surveys/interviews and length of fieldwork period)**
* **Analyse and report on the data**

**Weighting 30%**

Evaluation criteria

Pass:Minimum score of 2 against the ECC Quality Scoring MechanismFail:A score of 0 or 1 against the ECC Quality Scoring Mechanism

Page limit:

Maximum 4 / 8 x A4 page in minimum size 10 font  
(We suggest 4 pages as standard and 8 pages for more complex projects)

**3.2 Project Team**

**What is the make-up of the team that is required to deliver this project? Please include an overview of the project team’s levels of experience, skills and knowledge, alongside a description of the team structure and each person’s role in the project.**

**This should include details of any sub-contractors that would be involved in delivery of the project.**

**Weighting 15%**

Evaluation criteria

Pass:Minimum score of 2 against the ECC Quality Scoring MechanismFail:A score of 0 or 1 against the ECC Quality Scoring Mechanism

Page limit

Maximum 2 / 4 x A4 page in minimum size 10 font response  
(We suggest 2 pages as standard and 4 pages for more complex projects)

**3.3 Relevant Experience**

**Please provide details of your past experience from current or previous contracts that are relevant to this project. Please detail the name of the contract, customer name, value, year and description of the work conducted.**

**Weighting 20%**

Evaluation criteria

Pass:Minimum score of 2 against the ECC Quality Scoring MechanismFail:A score of 0 or 1 against the ECC Quality Scoring Mechanism

Page limit

Maximum 2 / 4 x A4 page in minimum size 10 font.  
(We suggest 2 pages as standard and 4 pages for more complex projects)

**3.4 Risk Management and Ethics**

**Please outline the key risks for this project and what strategies you will put in place to mitigate these. Please describe how you will ensure the research/evaluation is conducted to the highest ethical standards, including any specific considerations related to the participants taking part.**

**Weighting 15%**

Evaluation criteria

Pass:Minimum score of 2 against the ECC Quality Scoring MechanismFail:A score of 0 or 1 against the ECC Quality Scoring Mechanism

Page limit

Maximum 2 / 4 x A4 page in minimum size 10 font.  
(We suggest 2 pages as standard and 4 pages for more complex projects)

**3.5 Timetable and Project Management**

**Please provide a project timeline, including discussion of how you will meet key deadlines throughout the project, plus any support required from the ECC project team.**

**Please describe how and when you will meet with the ECC project team, how progress will be communicated and how any issues will be handled and resolved between both parties.**

**Weighting 20%**

Evaluation criteria

Pass:Minimum score of 2 against the ECC Quality Scoring MechanismFail:A score of 0 or 1 against the ECC Quality Scoring Mechanism

Page limit

Maximum 2 / 4 x A4 page in minimum size 10 font.  
(We suggest 2 pages as standard and 4 pages for more complex projects)

**Other suggested evaluation criteria:**

**(These can be used in addition to or in place of the example criteria set out above. Please remember to adjust percentage weightings accordingly.)**

1. **Deliverables and impact**

Please provide a plan for how you will work with key stakeholders and ensure deliverables achieve maximum impact.

1. **Roles and responsibilities**

Please provide details of expectations around roles and responsibilities of the ECC project team throughout the duration of the project. This should include details of information or support that may be required from the ECC project team, in order to ensure smooth delivery of the project.

1. **Working with vulnerable groups**

Please outline considerations around working with vulnerable participants, including details of different approaches you may need to take in order to recruit and engage with relevant participants.

You should also outline how you will manage any risks and ethical considerations relating to working with vulnerable participants.

1. **Pricing**

Please include a pricing matrix for your proposal.

All prices should be exempt of VAT and include any expenses.