

Government seeks industry views on arrangement for next Standing Offer Agreement for Quality Professional Services

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) released today (November 16) a consultation paper to invite views from the information technology (IT) industry on the Government's procurement arrangement for IT professional services.

The Government has been striving to foster development of the local IT industry, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), by enlisting them in government IT projects and implementing the Standing Offer Agreement for Quality Professional Services (SOA-QPS) as part of the Government's IT outsourcing strategy. The SOA-QPS4 in use will expire in the second half of next year. In preparation for the next SOA-QPS, the OGCIO today launched a one-month consultation on improvements to the present arrangement so as to cope with the latest changes in the IT market and increase the chances for SMEs to join the SOA-QPS.

The OGCIO is considering a number of enhancement proposals, such as removing the upper limit of the number of contractors, reorganising existing service categories in order to encourage more contractors to bid for individual projects and adjusting the contract limit of specific service categories to increase the opportunities for SMEs to participate in government IT projects. "To foster the development of the local IT industry, we welcome the industry to express its views, especially on the limit on the number of contractors for each category/group, merging or separation of existing service categories, and the demarcation limit of minor and major groups in terms of the contract value under certain service categories," a spokesman for the OGCIO said.

The Government has all along adopted a bulk supply arrangement for procuring IT professional services, and introduced in April 2019 a policy to embrace innovation in government procurement. The Government enters into a number of SOA-QPSs with suppliers selected through open tendering so as to enhance efficiency in procurement and expedite the process for contract signing by sparing departments from going through tendering procedures for each and every acquisition. Departments can invite proposals and make a selection from these contractors to undertake individual IT projects based on technical and price assessments within the validity period of the SOA-QPSs.

Up to October 2020, more than 1 500 contracts were awarded with an accumulated contract value of over \$1.5 billion under the SOA-QPS4. These contracts covered a wide range of services including feasibility studies, systems analysis and design, system implementation, system maintenance,

information security and independent testing.

The consultation paper is now available on the OGCI0 website at www.ogcio.gov.hk/en/news/consultations/. Interested parties may refer to the consultation paper for details and forward their comments and suggestions on or before December 15, 2020, by emailing qps_consultation@ogcio.gov.hk.