CREST

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE OF THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE ON SECURITY THREATS

Invitation to Tender

12 April 2017

1. Introduction

Approaching its second year since launch, the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats seeks to commission an independent review of the Centre's activities and outputs. This Invitation to Tender outlines the scope of the review sought and the process by which interested parties should bid to undertake the review.

2. Background

The Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST) is a national hub for understanding, countering and mitigating security threats. CREST brings together the UK's foremost expertise in understanding the psychological and social drivers of these threats, the skills and technologies that enable their effective investigation, and the protective security measures that help counter such threats. It does so within a context of significant stakeholder and international researcher engagement, and with a clear plan for sustained and long-term growth.

Initial funding for CREST was secured from the UK security and intelligence agencies following a competitive process administered by the Economic and Social Research Council. This initial funding is for £4.35 million over three years. A further £2.2m has been invested by CREST's founding Institutions.

3. Invitation

CREST seeks an independent, evidence-based evaluation of its activities and achievements in the first two years of operation. Bidders are encouraged to propose their own metrics and methodology for competing the evaluation effectively. They can expect to receive appropriate documentation (e.g., KPI tracking) from CREST, and face-to-face interview time with relevant Centre members.

The primary outcome from this review will be an evidence-based assessment of the extent to which CREST has achieved the objectives set out in its mission statement (see Annex A). The assessment should evaluate what CREST has achieved and highlight issues and opportunities for the Centre's future. Indicative aspects of CREST's performance that may be included in an evaluation are:

(1) An assessment of the quality of original research projects and syntheses being undertaken by CREST programmes and commissioned projects. This may include an assessment of the likely impact this work has had, and will have, on the relevant academic fields;

(2) An assessment of the quality of the communication products and network events delivered by CREST in terms of, *inter alia*, content, format, reach, and innovation;

(3) An assessment of CREST's capacity building activities including its efforts to engage the international community, secure future funding, and ensure its long-term sustainability;

(4) An assessment of the extent to which CREST's research, communication and network activities address the short and long-term concerns of stakeholders. This may include an evaluation of how effective the Centre is at ensuring the accessibility of outputs for stakeholders (face-to-face time with stakeholders is not guaranteed);

(5) An assessment of the extent to which CREST has ensured it acts ethically and retained its independence from stakeholders;

(6) An assessment of the extent to which the Centre is delivering value for money. This might include the value added by the Centre compared to alternative models (e.g., diffused activities in a series of standalone projects) and, where possible, the assignment of value to non-financial outputs (e.g., educational, synergies);

(7) Anything else as appropriate.

4. Bidding Process

4.1. Who can bid?

All commercial companies, charities, research organisations, and Higher Education Institutions who can demonstrate a capability to deliver a high-quality and appropriately evidenced review are eligible to bid. Bidders must meet Lancaster University's requirements for suppliers, including

having in place appropriate professional indemnity cover. An eligible Principal/Lead Reviewer may only submit one proposal.

4.2 How to bid

Interested parties should submit a proposal containing no more than 5 pages, with the following sections:

(1) A detailed description of the approach you will take to this review, including a full methodology statement that outlines the processes/methodologies you might employ;

(2) A timetable of proposed actions and activities that demonstrate how the review will be completed by the deadline. The timetable should include clear and measurable deliverables and should highlight any potential risks and risk mitigations;

(3) A detailed description of the skills and track record that you would bring to the review, including if relevant a list of previous experiences undertaking similar commissions. You may consider describing a specific, relevant case study to demonstrate your understanding and experience of delivering similar commissions;

(4) A description of any subcontracting arrangements envisaged together with names of subcontractors to be used;

(5) A description of the full costs of completing the independent review. This should include a break-down of cost categories and be clear about included VAT.

Bids must be costed and approved by the bidder's organisation authority before submission. CREST will treat all proposals as competitive information and will not disclose the contents beyond the bid assessors and CREST's contracting office.

Bids should be submitted on US Letter or A4 paper, with at least 2cm margins and a minimum sans serif font size of 11pt. The use of diagrams, tables, and other graphics that aid comprehension is encouraged.

Bidders must submit an electronic copy of their bid to submission@crestresearch.ac.uk by 10:00GMT on 25 May 2017. The

electronic submission must be in a single document of PDF format. CREST reserves the right to reject any bid document that does not conform to the requested format.

4.3 What funding is available?

CREST anticipates making up to £20,000 available for the completion of this review.

4.4 How will bids be assessed?

Bids will be assessed by three members of CREST's leadership team on the following equally weighted criteria:

Quality of proposal
- Demonstrated fit to the remit of the required review
- Clear work plan with realistic, achievable deliverables
- Likely value of the review to CREST and stakeholders moving forward

Track record of applicants
- An outstanding track record of conducting and delivering reviews of this nature. This may be fields outside of security research
- A track record of successful project completion

Value for money
- Reasonable and fully justified costs for the specified project. Note, costings will be assessed on an individual basis in terms of value for money and likely quality of the completed review. CREST will seek to appoint the proposal with the best value for cost and quality.

5. Timetable

12 April 2017 – Call specification released
11 May 2017, 17:00GMT – Deadline for questions and queries
25 May 2017 10:00GMT – Deadline for submitting bid
1 June 2017 – Successful bidder informed
31 August 2017 – Report delivered

6. Further information

If you have any questions or you require further information please contact Nicola Ronan (Centre Manager) before the deadline for questions and queries at commissioning@crestresearch.ac.uk

Annex A

The Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST) will deliver a world-class, interdisciplinary portfolio of activity that maximises the value of economic and social science research to countering threats to national security. It will be responsive to, but independent from, stakeholders, conducting its work in a transparent and accountable way that maximises interdisciplinary breadth. The activities of CREST will:

- Address key stakeholder questions by reviewing the current state-of-the-art and by providing policy and 'best practice' recommendations;
- undertake theoretically motivated, high-quality new research that either addresses gaps identified in the existing literature, or demonstrates the operational relevance of existing knowledge to stakeholder contexts;
- commission synthetic reviews, workshops, toolkit development, and research projects through a transparent and competitive process that delivers scientific excellence, stakeholder relevance, and value for money;
- produce a range of innovative outputs that effectively communicate state-of-the-art knowledge to the security and intelligence agencies, wider government scientists and policy makers, researchers, industry partners, local communities and the public.
- run engagement events that encourage interaction between academic and stakeholder and public communities at both the strategic and grass-roots level, building over time an interdisciplinary community
- produce the next generation of researchers and educators, deliver formal professional development for stakeholders, and engage SME and industry to support innovation.