Invitation to Tender:
Impact Review of CREST

1. Purpose

With its initial 3-year research portfolio drawing to a close, the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats seeks to commission a review of the impact of its activities and outputs. This document outlines the requirement and the process by which interested parties should tender 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 the threat, the skills and technologies that enable its effective investigation, and the protective security measures that help counter the threat in the first place. It does so within a context of significant stakeholder and international researcher engagement, and with a clear emphasis on delivering useful research.

CREST's initial funding was secured following a competitive process that was administered by the Economic and Social Research Council, which is the UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues. The Centre's initial funding was for three years, with £4.35 million from the UK security and intelligence agencies and a further £2.2m invested by the founding institutions. This funding came to an end on 30 September 2018, with £3.6 million of follow-on funding allowing the Centre to continue until September 2020.

3. Scope of Review

CREST seeks an independent account of the impact of its research in the first three years of operation. We seek to better understand and document what our researchers have achieved by tracing the journey of individual projects, from initial research co-design through to changes in awareness, understanding, practice, policy, training, or operational decisions.

While we do not anticipate the review being exhaustive, we do seek a review that covers different forms of research output, different forms of impact, and different kinds of success. To this end, bidders are encouraged to propose their own method for delivering an evaluation that gives the richest and most insightful account of what CREST has achieved. They can expect to receive from CREST appropriate documentation (e.g., KPI tracking, reports from users) and face-to-face interview time with relevant team members and users. We will also work with you on all design work so that your review can be released in the style of a CREST report.

We anticipate the successful review providing the following:

(1) A series of case-focused analyses (e.g., case studies), readable by a wide audience, that document what knowledge individual (or related) research projects have produced and how this has fed into the work of users;

(2) An assessment of how this work has uniquely contributed to the broader knowledge and practices of academic and professional communities;

(3) A compelling set of tangible evidence of the impact the work has had. This may include qualitative feedback from users or quantitative feedback based on proposed measures, as appropriate;

(4) An assessment of the extent to which projects have delivered value for money, including the value added by the Centre compared to diffused activities and, where possible, assigning value to non-financial outputs (e.g., educational, synergies).

4. Bidding Process

4.1. Who can bid?
All commercial companies, charities, think tanks, research organisations and Higher Education Institutions who can demonstrate a capability to deliver a high-quality review are open to bid. Eligible applicants may only submit one proposal.

4.2 How to bid
Interested parties should submit a response containing no more than 5 pages that covers the following: (1) approach and methodology; (2) timetable and deliverables; (3) costs; and (4) track record and risk mitigation. Bids must be costed and approved by the bidder organisation authority before submission. The costs submitted must represent the full cost of completing the independent review. The make-up of the costs should be clearly specified, as should VAT.

Bidders must submit an electronic copy of their bid to commissioning@crestresearch.ac.uk by 10:00GMT on 7 March 2019. The electronic submission must be in a single document of PDF format. **Any bid that does not conform to the format or submission requirements will not be considered.**

CREST will treat all proposals as competitive information and will not disclose the contents beyond the leadership team and colleagues evaluating the bids.

4.3 What funding is available?
CREST anticipates making available approximately £20,000 (excluding VAT) available for the completion of this review. Higher cost with appropriate justification will be considered.

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 moving forward

Track record of applicants
- An outstanding track record of conducting reviews of this nature. This may be a field 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 for value for money and likely quality of the undertaken review. CREST will not simply select the cheapest bid for funding.
- CREST reserves the right to not award the tender to any competing party when no tender meets the assessment criteria.

5. Timetable
11 February 2019 – Call specification released
28 February 2019, 17:00GMT – Deadline for questions and queries
7 March 2019, 10:00GMT – Deadline for submitting bid
14 March 2019 – Successful bidder informed
1 July 2019 - Draft final report delivered
15 July 2019 – Final report delivered

6. Further information
If you have any questions not already answered or you require further information, please contact:

Nicola Ronan (Centre Manager)
Email: commissioning@crestresearch.ac.uk