



TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Frequently Asked Questions

VENDOR ENGAGEMENT EVENT

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This document contains questions which the Alt HAN Company anticipates that vendors will seek the answers to or are material pieces of information to inform the market.

Question Area	Question	Answer
Commercial	What is the budget for the service(s)?	This is commercially confidential and will not be provided.
Commercial	What is the length of the contract?	We expect to award a contract for a minimum of 3 years.
Commercial	Will there be payment under the contract for Stages Detail Design (2A) and Design Assurance and Prototype (2B)?	All Stages from the Detail Design will be under contract and can involve payment to facilitate the development of designs. We anticipate that vendors/vendor groups will be in different stages of development for their designs and this process will, if necessary, assist with the funding for fully designing the solution.
Commercial	Will Alternative HAN Co. be able to provide funding to support technology development?	We acknowledge that payment for detailed design may be required, and we are open to options around commercial arrangements from vendors for this. The Alt HAN Forum's objectives are to deliver an economic and efficient rollout and vendors should keep this in mind.
Commercial	If we have a different commercial model to the one outlined in the Commercial Strategy will Alt HAN Co consider letting us use this?	In principle, no – Alt HAN Co wishes to use the model outlined for the reasons given and to meet the objectives in the critical success factors/criteria. However, we will be prepared to discuss particular points of concern and alternative suggestions to deliver the same objectives in 1:1 sessions. We do, however, reserve the right to modify our model if evidence becomes available that a more efficient and/or economic delivery approach is available.
Commercial	What are the Alt HAN Co's expectations on any developed Intellectual Property (IP)?	The Alt HAN Co expects to have the right to utilise, or transfer to a third party working on behalf of the Alt HAN Co, all IP developed during the contract. The precise contractual form has not yet been concluded.
Procurement	If we only want to provide part of the solution (by stage or by technology/use case) will you consider this?	No; we recognise this may mean that vendors may need to join forces and bid collaboratively in groupings to enable them to provide the full scope of services required over time. We would encourage vendors to do this where appropriate to offer combined 'best of breed' solutions.
Procurement	Will the Technology procurement allow vendors to bid for only one technology or stage?	No; Alt HAN Co are seeking for vendors to submit a tender which covers the entire range of services and technologies required to fill the Alt HAN 'gap'.
Procurement	Do you require a single vendor company to provide all technologies or services?	We require a single vendor or vendor group to deliver the full scope of services and technologies, subject to success in being selected at each stage gate. We have no requirements on what the vendor/vendor group looks like, although we would expect to see a lead contractor nominated.
Procurement	Will I/we be disqualified if our vendor group has been set up specifically to bid for these services? Procurement	No; however as with any bidding vendor group we would need to assess the strength of your proposal vis a vis collaborative working, dependencies and contracts in-place between the parties making up the vendor group.

Procurement	Do you require vendors/vendor groups to demonstrate experience in all areas of the scope of procurement?	Yes; whilst we expect to provide very specific requirements on the Detailed Design stage, we will provide high-level requirements on the remaining stages. Vendors/vendor groups must demonstrate compliance with all requirements during the Selection and Initial Design stage.
Procurement	Will a site visit be required as part of the assessment process?	Yes.
Procurement	How many vendors will be in each stage?	We are seeking to maintain a competitive process and to award up to 4 contracts for the Detail Design stage. This is subject to meeting the minimum quality criteria. We expect to award the installation service to a single vendor, but will reserve the right to award to more than one.
Procurement	Will vendors that have already been involved in the Technology RFI process follow the same process as other vendors?	Yes, all vendors will follow the same process in the procurement, which will be set out in the Invitation to Tender (ITT).
Procurement	What dependencies exist between the Technology and Operational Services procurement work streams	Currently, the Operational Services procurement is scheduled to begin at a point in time when we have further certainty on the Technology Solutions available and the timescales for their delivery. We will use learning from the first stage of this Technology Services procurement to shape the Operational Services requirements and ensure these work streams are developed in parallel.
Procurement	If our technology offering is already more advanced/more mature than the Alt HAN Co Stage 1/Stage 2A/etc. do we still have to jump through those hoops?	Yes, the Alt HAN Co wants to manage the process/costs/risks by taking this in steps, building confidence and by conducting a competition. If your technology offering is mature this should a) reduce your bid costs b) give you confidence in your ability to score well and be selected for later stages. There will be scope within the procurement process to accelerate development and manufacturing subject to control to ensure that early delivery of solutions are not constrained.
Procurement	Can any information be shared on the contract or the procurement documentation?	We are unable to share any additional information at this time and will be making the information available with the issue of the ITT.
Procurement	What is the award criteria for the Contract?	It will be based upon the most economically advantageous tender. The precise award criteria will be set out in the ITT.
Procurement	How do I get the Invitation to Tender?	Please submit an Expression of Interest to AltHANProcurement@gemserv.com . Vendors will be provided with an NDA which must be completed prior to receiving an ITT.
Procurement	After contract award, how is the decision made to award the next stage of the procurement programme (e.g. Design Assurance and Prototype)?	A down-selection with a mini-tender will occur at each stage of the process after the Detail Design. For each mini-tender the requirements, questions and award criteria, will be issued as procurement documentation for vendors to respond to.

Procurement	How do I get further information?	<p>Information from the Vendor Engagement event, questions from the day and any subsequent questions from 1:1s (respecting confidentiality as appropriate) will be distributed to attendees and any vendor that has expressed an interest.</p> <p>Further information will be distributed as part of the ITT. All request/engagement must be through AltHANProcurement@gemserv.com.</p>
Procurement	What if technological solutions cannot be designed or implemented within the provided timescales?	<p>It is critical that the Alt HAN Co and GB Energy Suppliers meet the UK Government's objectives for Smart meters to be installed by 2020. The timescales have been developed based on the current status of technology and the Government's objectives.</p> <p>We would therefore press for vendors to demonstrate how those timescales can be met (or accelerated) and any risks which may arise from achieving those timescales.</p>
Procurement	Who will be making the award decision?	<p>The award decision will be made by the Alt HAN Forum. The Alt HAN Forum membership is comprised of GB Energy Suppliers.</p> <p>The Alt HAN Co project team will make the recommendation to award based on their evaluation of tenders.</p>
Procurement	Who will be assessing the deliverables at the end of each stage?	All deliverables during service delivery will be assessed by the Alt HAN Company.
Procurement	Do all vendors in a vendor group should be UK based?	<p>There is no requirement for vendors or vendor groups to be UK based.</p> <p>A UK presence would be required to facilitate delivery of Detailed Design and Design Assurance and Prototype. A UK presence is mandatory for the installation services.</p>
Procurement	Is there a restriction on the number of vendors that can make up a vendor group?	There is no restriction; however as with any bidding vendor group Alt HAN Co will need to assess the cohesion, manageability and clarity of roles and responsibilities within the group in terms of the confidence that it will be able to meet the requirements.
Procurement	If Alt HAN Co was to procure a solution which did not work, what would the resolution route be?	<p>This depends on the type of failure that was experienced. If this concerns individual devices which are defective, this would be covered by the service manager through their performance management of the technology provider. We also acknowledge that a means of triage is needed to understand whether the product is defective or whether there was an error in installation, etc.</p> <p>If there was a wider issue of the technology not being able to perform to the levels claimed by the vendor (e.g. in terms of range, or not being able to meet fundamental data rate requirements) this would need to be dealt with through the relevant provisions for contractual remedy.</p> <p>This commercial strategy process is designed to ensure that the solution is fit for purpose at each stage of the process.</p>

Procurement	What is the role of the technology provider in the long term?	To some extent, this depends on the type of technology provided. Some solutions will be 'plug and play' or 'fit and forget', and in such cases the long-term role of the technology provider will be limited to warranties and other standard aspects of a product procurement. However, some solutions may require extra network management or solution support services provided by the vendor. In terms of technology selection and interface with energy suppliers, including first line management of issues, this role currently sits with the service manager function defined within the Operational Services RFI.
Procurement	We note that the Operational Services procurement timescales are currently later than those of the Technology Solutions procurement. Will any input from the Technology Solutions RFI be able to be fed into the Operational Services RFP?	Yes; the Operation Services RFP will be issued after the Technology Solutions ITT responses have been received and evaluated.
Procurement	Would you have technical individual/ expert validating the solution?	We will be utilising the expertise of the Business Support Function, independent subject matter experts and experts from GB energy suppliers.
Procurement	When can we expect the ITT?	We plan to issue the ITT on or around the 25th of October 2017.
Design	Do you have a preferred technology solution type at this stage? E.g. Broadband, PLC	No – we are technology agnostic at this stage. We recognise that there are pros and cons associated with each technology type, and that certain types are suitable for different solutions or building topologies. We are more interested in any solution which is able to meet the requirements which will be set out in the ITT, rather than a pre-defined solution type. Additional research as to the viability of the different solution types has been conducted on our behalf by a technical consultancy We will share relevant information relating to the outcome of this work in the ITT.
Design	Are you looking for a solution which is able to meet the needs of all devices which might require Alternative HAN, or would you consider a solution which can only meet the needs of particular devices (e.g. just gas meters or IHDs?)	We are open to all proposals for solutions which vendors may have. However, if a solution can only work with particular devices, vendors need to appreciate the impact this might have on the market size for their solution, and that such a solution would, all else being equal, be less desirable than a solution which can work with all device types.
Design	Will solutions which require the Alt HAN device to join the HAN be disregarded?	No, we are open to proposals for solutions which require the device to join the HAN. We will expect vendors to clearly articulate in their response if their solution will join the HAN.
Design	Will solutions which require use of the WAN (Wide Area Network) be disregarded?	We are open to all solutions which meet our technical requirements. In this case, such a solution would be considered so long as the data is made available via the HAN, meeting the requirements set out in the SMETS and CHTS and in our technical requirements.

Design	Is there more information about the security requirements?	The security model for GB smart metering is based on the Commercial Product Assurance Security Characteristics published by the CESA. While these characteristics exist for other smart metering devices, to date nothing has been published around Alternative HAN as solutions have not been defined yet. Once technologies are selected, it is likely that engagement with CESA and other groups (such as the SEC Panel Security Sub-Committee) will be required. In the meantime, vendors should describe the security features in place in their solutions. It is also acknowledged that, for communications purposes, the security characteristics built into the ZigBee protocol form a large part of the security model.
Design	What are the key challenges around HAN connectivity?	The key challenges typically relate to distance between HAN devices (e.g. the Communications Hub and CADs such as the IHD) and building construction and materials.
Design	For solutions which are at an early stage of development, will it be an issue if we are not in a position to present evidence from testing?	We are aware that vendors are at different stages in the development cycle, and that many solutions may not yet be in a state where they are ready to be tested. We are happy to consider solutions at an early stage of development; following analysis of the ITT responses we receive, we will consider what constitutes a suitable approach towards testing and technical assurance. We expect the commercial proposals to reflect the degree of development required
Design	Do Consumer Access Devices need to be served by the HAN?	Yes; all devices provided for in SMETS2 will need to be served by Alternative HAN solutions.
Design	What will the design evaluation approach for the ITT be?	Details of the evaluation approach will be made clear in the ITT documentation. Some high-level criteria examples: compliance with technical requirements, confidence in the vendor' capability to develop and deliver the solution. The evaluation approach will reflect the design ITT objectives which will be outlined in the ITT.
Design	You have split your example use cases into two premise types, Multi Dwelling Unit and Large Single Premise – Why is this and do you have a view of how the Alt HAN 'gap' of candidate premises is split between these premise types?	<p>The use cases which will be included in the ITT derive from several core problem scenarios, where the IHD and/or gas meter are considered to be remote from the communications hub. The likely infrastructure will differ where multiple dwellings exist within the same building compared to a single one so the use cases will be split to reflect this difference in terms of solution design variation.</p> <p>Due to the lack of detailed premise data at this stage we are not able to confirm the volume or split of premises across the two categories, however the Alt HAN solution should seek to address HAN connectivity issues in both premise types. We are actively working to refine the size of the Alt HAN 'gap' and the procurement process will be informed as certainty and evidence increases.</p>
Design	Which party will perform installation and maintenance of Alternative HAN solutions?	We believe that the decision on the most suitable party to perform the solution installation will be dependent on the solution type and skill level required; this party could be the Supplier's appointed agent for the site, the technology provider or another service provider contracted by Alternative HAN Co.

Design	How do the timescales of the Alternative HAN Project relate to the timescales of the DCC dual-band communications hub project and the availability of devices operating on ZigBee sub-GHz more generally?	We do not believe that there are any dependencies of the Alternative HAN Project on the DCC dual-band communications hub project. We are keen to have access to Alternative HAN solutions as soon as possible, and we would seek to avoid any delay to the rollout of Alternative HAN simply because of any lack of availability of sub-GHz ZigBee. If there were any dependencies, we would seek to use a phased approach to solution introduction (by introducing technologies not dependent on sub-GHz ZigBee first).
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Design	What is required from the vendor in the detailed design phase?	<p>Vendors should provide a clear description of each technology, comprising detailed design information for example: design drawings, description of logic, operation and failure modes, quality, health, safety and environment.</p> <p>Vendors should also provide evidence of a design and development review process, where reviews will confirm technical assurance of the technology against the specified requirements, as well as evidence that a design verification process has been completed i.e. that the technologies can be manufactured as designed and that the output will meet the input requirements.</p>
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Design	What is required from the vendor in the testing and prototyping phase?	<p>Testing and prototyping will be a core, discrete stage of the procurement process. Alt HAN Co will be conducting piloting activity in partnership with the vendor, covering testing and trialling within Alt HAN premises. The output of this activity should validate that the technology meets the specified requirements.</p> <p>The vendor will need to submit its own methods of design validation including simulation techniques, in addition to its design and development change process</p>
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