

RETAIL BANKING MARKET INVESTIGATION

Notice of intention to conduct SME qualitative research

1. Further to the notice published on 15 January 2015, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is seeking to engage a market research agency to undertake qualitative research in relation to SMEs to complement the analysis of existing survey datasets.
2. Our intention is to carry out qualitative work among SMEs. The outline research objectives, methodology and firms invited to tender are described below. We invite parties to comment on this notice. **The deadline for comments is midday Friday 13 March 2015.** Please submit them to retailbanking@cma.gsi.gov.uk or write to the team at:

Retail banking team
Competition and Markets Authority
Victoria House
Southampton Row
London
WC1B 4AD

Research objectives

3. The purpose of this qualitative research is to provide us with a better understanding of the motivations for SMEs' behaviour, complementing quantitative surveys and other evidence. We currently intend for the research to include the following areas:
 - (a) Price transparency and price negotiation when SMEs are seeking and applying for business current accounts (BCAs) and finance.
 - (b) The motivations for multi-banking (including partial switching) and the effect it has on switching.
 - (c) The motivations for switching/not switching and the practical barriers involved in switching.

- (d) The importance of overdraft facilities and finance on SMEs' choice of BCA and their decision to switch.
4. It is possible that we may add to or remove some of these areas in discussion with our contractor.

Methodology

5. We will agree the methodology once we have appointed a contractor. However, at this stage we believe that a combination of in-depth interviews and mini groups may be required. We also anticipate that the research will cover a range of larger and smaller SMEs, and those with simple and more complex banking needs.
6. The companies on the framework that have been invited to tender are listed below:
- Accent Marketing and Research Ltd
 - BDRC Continental Ltd
 - DJS Research Ltd
 - GfK NOP Ltd
 - IFF Research Ltd
 - Ipsos MORI
 - ORC International Ltd
 - Research Works Ltd
 - TNS-BMRB
7. We have requested that potential bidders provide details of how they would implement comprehensive procedures within their agency to manage and minimise any potential conflicts of interest. Special requirements will be included in the service agreement between the CMA and the retained agency.

8. In particular, the CMA intends to require the successful bidder to meet the following minimum requirements:
- Until the contract completion date (or until the termination of the contract):
 - no member of the team of staff undertaking the CMA’s project (the director responsible for the team working on the project and research executives) will undertake any work for other participants in the retail banking market without the CMA’s consent; and
 - the team of staff undertaking the CMA’s project will be kept physically separate from teams who undertake work for any other participant in the retail banking market.
 - Until the market investigation and, if applicable, any relevant appeals are finally determined:
 - no member of the team of staff undertaking the CMA’s project (the director responsible for the team working on the project and research executives) will undertake any work that is directly related to the scope of the Retail Banking Market Investigation, and could therefore be relied upon by a party in their submissions to the CMA, without the CMA’s consent;
 - no individual working on the CMA’s project will discuss that project with colleagues involved in work for other participants in the retail banking market; and
 - the team’s data is to be secured so that personnel involved in work for other participants in the retail banking market cannot access it.