



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:  
January 17, 2020**

**PERIOD OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION ENDS:  
February 10, 2020**

ABOUT PROPOSALS. The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (hereafter “the Commission”) invites submission of proposals to provide a concise, one-time unclassified report on China’s Corporate Social Credit System.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION. The Commission was established by Congress in 2000 to monitor and report to Congress on the national security implications of the bilateral trade and economic relationship between the United States and the People’s Republic of China. Further details about the Commission are available on its website at: [www.uscc.gov](http://www.uscc.gov).

The Commission solicits this research pursuant to its Congressional mandate (contained in P.L. 113-291, Section 1259B), which states, “The Commission ... shall investigate and report ... on...”

“(F) The strategic economic and security implications of the cyber capabilities and operations of the People’s Republic of China....”

“(H) The drivers, nature, and implications of the growing economic, technological, political, cultural, people-to-people, and security relations of the People’s Republic of China’s with other countries, regions, and international and regional entities (including multilateral organizations)....”

“(I) The compliance of the People’s Republic of China with its commitments to the World Trade Organization, other multilateral commitments, bilateral agreements signed with the United States, commitments made to bilateral science and technology programs, and any other commitments and agreements strategic to the United States....”

“(J) The implications of restrictions on speech and access to information in the People’s Republic of China for its relations with the United States in economic and security policy, as well as any potential impact of media control by the People’s Republic of China on United States economic interests....”

This report’s key research requirements are:

1. **Describe the Corporate Social Credit System (SCS) as a regulatory mechanism and policy tool.** Provide a basic definition of the Corporate SCS, including an organization chart or other graphic depicting its taxonomy. How does this system function now? Which agency or agencies administer it? Describe the most advanced agency-level or provincial-level Corporate SCS pilot. Based on policy documents, how does China's central government envision it will function when fully complete? How does the Chinese government define and enforce compliance under the Corporate SCS?
2. **Assess the impact of the Corporate SCS on U.S. companies.** How does this change the compliance burden for U.S. companies operating in China? What aspects are most difficult for U.S. companies to comply with? What recourse do U.S. companies have when they receive negative ratings or are "blacklisted"? Are there particular industries in which U.S. companies face heavier regulatory burdens or are more likely to be targeted under the Corporate SCS?
3. **Outline the technology underpinning the Corporate SCS.** What data does the system collect and how will it be used? What system access, if any, will corporations be required to provide to government entities? To what extent is the current system fragmented by agency or jurisdiction and driven by human labor rather than automated? What is required for the national system to coalesce to a unified, automated system, and when will this likely be complete? Which Chinese companies provide the technological architecture of the system (hardware and software)? Are foreign companies involved in supplying, supporting, and integrating the Corporate SCS, directly or indirectly?
4. **Examine the competitive implications of the Corporate SCS for foreign firms.** Is the application of Corporate SCS different for Chinese and foreign companies? Compare the standards, enforcement, and implications for domestic companies versus foreign companies. Is policy explicitly designing the Corporate SCS to regulate foreign companies? What is the impact of the Corporate SCS on foreign firms' ability to compete on an equal footing with domestic firms, and how could the Corporate SCS be used to privilege domestic firms over foreign firms? How are Chinese regulators likely to incorporate the Corporate SCS into market access and foreign investment regulation? How much leeway is there for individual officials' discretion in assigning credit ratings? In what other ways could the system be used as a trade barrier? Does the Corporate SCS constitute a non-tariff measure as defined by the WTO's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade or other WTO Agreements?
5. **Evaluate how the Chinese government could use the Corporate SCS as a geopolitical tool.** Is there evidence the Chinese government is designing the Corporate SCS to compel corporate behavior beyond its sovereign territory? How could the Chinese government use the Corporate SCS to pressure other countries? Does the Chinese government intend to export elements of the Corporate SCS? What data is the Chinese government requiring foreign companies to provide in inspections or via other regulation that is used in the Corporate SCS? Is the system collecting data from

sources outside of China in formulating credit scores of foreign companies? How does China's application of the Corporate SCS to foreign, non-U.S. companies challenge U.S. foreign policy interests?

The report should include an **executive summary** of the report's key findings; a list of **recommendations for Congress**; a **brief overview of the sources and analytic methodology used for the report**; and a **brief explanation of the scope and limitations of the report**.

Additional Requirements:

1. Prior to the award of any contract, the contractor must be registered in the federal System for Award Management (SAM).
2. Once the Commission selects a contractor for this project, and a contract is signed, public notice of this may be made on the Commission's website.
3. The Commission's goal is to have a report prepared for review in a timely fashion. In ordinary circumstances, once the Commission selects a contractor and a contract is signed, a draft report —not to exceed 40 pages of text— must be submitted to the Commission for review no later than 45 calendar days from the date the contract is signed. The Commission will then endeavor to provide comments and requests for adjustments within 20 days; subsequently, the final report must be submitted within 20 days of formal receipt of the Commission's comments. The Commission recognizes, under certain circumstances, a contractor may wish to have more time to prepare the first draft of the report under the contract. The contractor, in their contract proposal, should stipulate the time frame for submission of the draft report. It is to be understood; however, that time is of the essence in completing research contracts for the Commission.
4. As work on the report progresses, the Commission's Research Coordinator shall act as the Commission's representative in monitoring the progress, quality, and responsiveness of the report to the major issues of concern identified in this Request for Proposals (RFP). The Research Coordinator shall, on request to the contractor, be entitled to informal briefings on the status of the research work and to readings of the outline and draft in progress.
5. The report shall be free of typographical errors and conform to the Chicago Manual of Style. Upon receipt of all drafts, the Commission will inspect the document for typographical errors and deviations from the Chicago Manual of Style guidelines. At the discretion of the Commission, if a draft contains excessive deficiencies, the Commission will return the draft to the contractor and request the contractor cure the draft of deficiencies within five (5) working days (not counting weekends and Federal holidays). Upon resubmission of the draft by the contractor to the Commission, should deficiencies remain, the Commission, at its discretion, will submit the draft to its copyeditor for correction, the cost of which (\$41.00 per hour)

will be deducted from the final cost of the contract. The contract shall be subject to termination if the Commission deems that the work is of unsatisfactory quality.

6. At the Commission's discretion, the report procured via this RFP may be posted on the Commission's website.
7. Each organization or individual responding to this request must warrant they will perform this work solely for the Commission, and the resulting report will not be shared with other parties without the prior written consent of the Commission.
8. The Commission expects contractors to identify all personnel working on the contract, and that there will not be any delegation of responsibilities to other parties without prior written approval of the Commission.
9. At the discretion and request of the Commission, the contractor shall, within a year after publication of the report, agree to participate in up for two (2) separate briefings, and up to one (1) public hearing, held by the Commission, of up to two (2) hours each in the Washington, DC area, supported by at least one (1) individual affiliated with the contractor identified as "key personnel." This could include, but not necessarily be limited to, briefing the content of the research to Commissioners and Commission staff, appearing as witnesses at a public hearing held by the Commission, and briefing the content of the research to Members of Congress and/or their staff. No additional remuneration will be provided to the contractor for these briefings or a hearing. The Commission will make a good faith effort to schedule briefings and a hearing at times that are subject to mutual agreement.

Primary Selection Criteria:

1. The Commission will determine which organization or individual responding to this request will be awarded the contract based on a comprehensive "best value" analysis of the proposals received, to include costs, technical value, and ability to complete the work satisfactorily and on time, and past performance with the Commission, if applicable.
2. The primary weighting criterion in selection shall be the assessed qualifications and ability of an organization or individual to address the fundamental research points enunciated above ("key research requirements").
3. The cost and amount of time necessary to complete the report will also be considered as criteria in the selection process.
4. The Commission is a Legislative Branch agency not subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR).

Proposal submissions should include:

1. A statement of the applicant's relevant qualifications to satisfy the terms of this RFP, to include curricula vitae for personnel intended for work on the project.
2. Identification of the principal researchers who will be responsible for the preparation of the report. It is understood that the designation of the researchers is a critical element of the proposal, and any changes regarding which individuals will be involved in the report's preparation must be approved by the Commission in advance and in writing.
3. A description of the research methodology the applicant proposes to employ. In describing methodology, the submission should provide detailed descriptions of the sources and methods that will be used to research the report's topic and the extent to which Chinese language sources, if any, and other primary materials will be used.
4. A list of any entities for whom you have conducted research or provided consulting services in the past. The Commission understands you may be limited in providing such information by confidentiality agreements.
5. An estimate of the time the applicant will need to complete the required work.
6. The price the applicant will charge to the Commission to complete the work set forth in this RFP.
7. The proposal shall not exceed seven (7) pages and may be shorter.

Organizations and individuals wishing to submit a proposal in response to this RFP must ensure that the response arrives at the location noted below by **5:30 p.m. (EST)** on **February 10, 2020**, or it will not be accepted or considered.

Electronic submissions are acceptable. Email attachments should not exceed 5 MB.

Proposals, as well as inquiries or any other correspondence related to this matter, should be directed to:

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