



## **THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES**

### **ARCHIVE SERVICE ACCREDITATION AND INCLUSION – EXTERNAL CHALLENGE**

#### **INVITATION TO TENDER – OPEN COMPETITION**

**DEADLINE FOR TENDER SUBMISSIONS – 12 NOON (UK TIME) 20 AUGUST 2021**

## **1 ABOUT US**

- 1.1 The National Archives (TNA) is the official archive and publisher for the UK government, and for England and Wales. We are the guardians of some of our most iconic national documents, dating back over 1,000 years. We are an accredited archive service.
- 1.2 Our 21st-century role is to collect and secure the future of the government record, both digital and physical, to preserve it for generations to come, and to make it as accessible and available as possible.
- 1.3 Our long-term strategy, [Archives For Everyone](#), commits us to lead the archives sector to fulfil the vision set out in the strategic vision for archives, [Archives Unlocked](#), promoting our shared values of trust, enrichment and openness. It also sets out our aim to lead in reimagining archival practice for the 21st century, pioneering new and ethical approaches to appraisal and selection, description, digital preservation and access.
- 1.4 As part of this leadership role, Archive Sector Development leads the management and delivery of a UK-wide partnership programme, [Archive Service Accreditation](#). This programme sets a management standard for the UK, supporting sector improvement, and conducts assessments,

making awards of Accredited Archive Service where the standard is met. There are seven Accreditation partners, and the programme is managed by a governing Committee, drawn from the partners and from open recruitment across the archive sector. The Committee and partners aim to ensure that the standard grows and develops over time.

- 1.5 Archive Service Accreditation was launched in 2013, and a major review will begin in 2023 to ensure that the standard remains relevant. The standard and programme were developed in a co-creation process across the archive sector, and this ethos remains critical to the programme, to ensure that the standard addresses key challenges in archives of all types and sizes, supports their resilience and ensures they engage well with their stakeholders.
- 1.6 This tender is intended to support us by developing an equality, diversity and inclusion external challenge approach to Archive Service Accreditation, ahead of shaping the major review of the standard and programme. The aim is to provide the space to capture expert external views on how a specialist standard can support inclusive practice. Specifically, we would like an external challenge which draws in feedback from wider populations than those closely engaged in archives management, looking beyond our immediate community to understand best practice and options for development.

## 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The National Archives and the Archive Service Accreditation governing committee and partners have identified a need to increase the programme's explicit support for equality, diversity and inclusion. The Committee have approved a roadmap for developing this in the coming years [<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/roadmap-to-developing-archive-service-accreditation-2021-05.pdf>]. Initial changes before the major review of the programme in 2023 are being made within the structure of the current standard, across the existing module structure (Organisational health; Collections; Stakeholders and their experiences).
- 2.2 The activity should primarily be designed to be delivered in a single stage, ending before 31 May 2022, with the majority of deliverables required for 31 March 2022. If required to gain maximum understanding of external challenge and/or or build effective and sustained relationships for constructive feedback, suppliers may design a stage two for delivery in financial year 2022-23. This should not represent the majority of activity, and would be subject to funding being made available and further effective outcomes being clearly identified.
- 2.3 We are seeking a supplier to deliver the following:  
**- Design an external challenge process for Archive Service Accreditation**  
Design an effective and wide-ranging external challenge which engages a number of key groups and bodies to capture commentary on Accreditation and its potential development. This should seek the views of groups experienced in identifying and overcoming barriers to participation relating to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, but also may include discussion with individuals who have a variety of experiences of archives, including non-users, to capture reflection on what a standard which centres inclusive practice could look like.

Please note that the budget and plan for this work should include compensation for their participation to individuals who are contributing their time and views outside the scope of their paid roles.

- **Deliver external challenge interviews/workshops to capture responses according to the design**

Deliver initial elements of the external challenge process, which may involve interviews, focus groups or direct consultation with expert bodies, to capture a range of views of the potential for designing an inclusive standard. There may be desirable elements of the designed challenge process which cannot be delivered within current timeline and scope and are subject to a stage 2 proposal but the initial stage of the project should conclude having captured a range of views and engaged a variety of experiences.

- **Report on the findings of the external challenge activity**

Create a written report summarising findings of the external challenge work completed by 31 March 2022 for circulation to the Archive Service Accreditation Committee and partners. If required, this may contain recommendations for a stage 2, with costings.

- **Attend the annual meeting of the Archive Service Accreditation Committee to present findings**

The Archive Service Accreditation governing committee meets annually in May, and the appointed supplier should be prepared to attend for up to two hours to present their findings and support constructive discussion by the Committee. The exact date of Committee 2022 is to be confirmed.

## 2.4 **Use of the work**

The work will be used to guide the Archive Service Accreditation partners and Committee in future reviews of the standard and programme. The report will be shared in full with suppliers appointed for the major planned Archive Service Accreditation review.

The report and/or a summary thereof may be published online, by decision of the Committee. Findings within the report may be presented in future workshops, presentations and discussions relating to the Accreditation programme, to guide future development.

### 3. REQUIREMENTS, OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES

- We believe the methodology for delivering this requirement should include identification of key groups and their requirements for an inclusive standard, including:
  - *Background research* to identify key expert bodies representing excluded groups' experiences, who are able to offer external critique and guidance
  - *Design of a challenge process* which captures multiple views and requirements representing different types of exclusion from archives, both through engagement with formal organisations and through conversations with those interested in developing inclusive standards, including appropriate compensation for their time
  - Once the design is agreed, *conducting this challenge process* including appropriate engagement with both expert bodies for excluded communities and some wider engagement and discussion around the possibilities for inclusive standards
  - *Report* detailing findings and making recommendations for how Archive Service Accreditation can work to ensure that it fully supports inclusion in archive services across the areas of organisational health, collections management, and stakeholders and their experiences.

#### 3.2 Project deliverables are:

- A designed challenge process, which includes specifying how individuals contributing to the work will be appropriately compensated
- A report on the challenge process outcomes, due by 31 March 2022, which summarises key points for potentially developing Archive Service Accreditation. The report may include but is not limited to: improvements to guidance and assessment which set clear expectations for practical steps to increase inclusion, across all areas of the existing standard; recommendations for how the planned full review of Accreditation in 2023 can be framed to ensure a focus on inclusion; and recommendations for potential reshaping or shifting emphasis of the standard itself to centre inclusion as core to archives'

delivery.

- 3.3 The appointed supplier should connect with a range of appropriate expert bodies with experience of reducing exclusion, particularly around the protected characteristics identified under the Equality Act 2010, and other factors identified in the roadmap to increasing inclusive content in the Accreditation standard, such as socio-economic or educational background, digital and geographical exclusion.
- 3.4 The supplier should design a process which captures views on how an inclusive standard can function. This may involve those closely engaged in the archive sector, but should also seek wider views on how standards and inclusion can intersect productively. In order to save time and reduce costs, we anticipate that any interviews and facilitated events are likely to be held virtually online. Participants should be appropriately compensated for their participation where this activity is not core to their employment, and the approach to this should be explained in the tender response.
- 3.5 For those closely engaged in the archive sector, we note that the Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland) is a partner in Archive Service Accreditation and convenes a group of diversity champions who are well versed in archives and the needs of diverse communities. They may be a useful bridging point for the supplier and a discussion group in their own right. Archives West Midlands is developing a 'No Barriers' approach within its members on exclusion, so has a services-based pool of experience of current barriers. The National Archives lead can put the appointed supplier in touch with relevant contacts.
- 3.6 In order to assist with your methodology and for information only, we note that a Part 2 process may be proposed, to build longer-term trust relationships and engage individuals in considering options in more detail. This would be subject to agreement, budget and further reporting, and should not replace a substantive output from Part 1.

- 3.7 Timings: The designed process must be delivered to TNA before the end of November 2021 for discussion and agreement, with the final report delivered by 31 March 2021.
- 3.8** The maximum available budget for this contract is £8,000 excluding VAT but including all other taxes or expenses. Our expectation is for any meetings and events to be held virtually online, in order to save time and reduce costs. Within the budget, individuals consulted as part of the process should be appropriately compensated for their time where this falls outside their paid employment. Suppliers should explain their approach to such compensation.

#### 4. HOW TO RESPOND

- 4.1 If you have any clarification questions related to your Tender Response, please submit these to [procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk) by **12 noon (UK time) on 13 August 2021**.
- 4.2 Please submit your Tender Response to [procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk) by **12 noon (UK time) on 20 August 2021**.
- 4.3 It is for you to determine what format your Tender Response should take so as to describe your offer in a clear, comprehensive fashion. However please ensure your Tender Response includes as a minimum:
- Your **understanding** of the project and deliverables;
  - Details of your prior **experience** suited to this project, including understanding of sector-related guidance and standards;
  - Your proposed **methodology and timetable** for delivery of the project outcomes;
  - Names and experience of the **individuals** you will assign to the project, and their involvement with each phase of unit of the work;
  - Your **contract price**, including breakdown of costs for each phase or unit of work, day rate for each team member and other costs or expenses including compensation for individuals consulted.



## 5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

5.1 Your Tender Response will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Category	Maximum pre-weighted score	Weighting	Maximum weighted score
1. Extent to which proposal demonstrates an understanding of the brief	10	2.5	25
2. Knowledge and experience relevant to the project, including understanding of approaches to inclusion in	10	2.5	25
3. Quality of methodology and experience in relation to desk-based research and stakeholder engagement	10	2	20
4. Names and experience of individuals assigned to the project	10	1	10
5. Contract price	10	2	20

5.2 Price scores will be based on a comparison between each Supplier's price offer, based on the percentage difference from the lowest bid price. The lowest offered price will receive the maximum pre-weighted score of 10 points, a price which is 20% higher will receive a score of 8 (i.e. the maximum score minus 20%).

5.3 Other categories will be evaluated according to the table below:

<b>10 Points</b>	<b>Outstanding:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential Supplier has provided a response that addresses all parts of the requirement</li><li>• Potential Supplier has provided evidence to support all elements of their response</li><li>• The evidence supplied is convincing and highly relevant to the requirement</li><li>• Potential Supplier's response is clear and easy to understand</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where relevant, Potential Supplier has demonstrated a high level of capability to deliver new and innovative service approaches</li> </ul>
<b>7 Points</b>	<b>Good:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Supplier has provided a response that addresses all parts of the requirement</li> <li>Potential Supplier has provided evidence to support most elements of their response</li> <li>The evidence supplied is good and relevant to the requirement</li> <li>Potential Supplier's response is clear and easy to understand</li> <li>Where relevant, Potential Supplier has demonstrated some level of capability to deliver new and innovative service approaches</li> </ul>
<b>4 Points</b>	<b>Average:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Supplier has provided a response that addresses some parts of the requirement</li> <li>Potential Supplier has provided evidence to support some elements of their response, but not all</li> <li>The evidence supplied has some limited relevance to the requirement</li> <li>Potential Supplier's response is not always clear and easy to understand</li> <li>Where relevant, Potential Supplier has demonstrated limited capability to deliver new and innovative service approaches</li> </ul>
<b>1 Point</b>	<b>Poor:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential Supplier has provided a response that fails to address most parts of the requirement</li> <li>Potential Supplier has provided little or no evidence to support most elements of their response</li> <li>The evidence supplied is very weak and has very limited relevance to the requirement</li> <li>Potential Supplier's response is not always clear and easy to understand</li> <li>Where relevant, Potential Supplier has demonstrated little or no capability to deliver new and innovative service approaches</li> </ul>

5.4 We reserve the right to shortlist a number of applicants for interview. After interview, the Quality scores above will be revisited to take into account the outcomes of those interviews.

## 6. PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

6.1 The procurement timetable is as follows:

Ref.	Description	Date
1	Invitation to Tender published	30 July 2021
2	Deadline for Potential Suppliers to submit clarification questions to <a href="mailto:procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk">procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk</a> *	12 noon (UK time) 13 August 2021
3	Deadline for Potential Suppliers to submit Tender Responses to <a href="mailto:procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk">procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk</a>	5pm (UK time) 20 August 2021
4	(Optional) Interviews with shortlisted suppliers	25/26 August 2021
5	Contract award	27 August 2021 (anticipated)

\* Any clarification question received that TNA deems to be relevant to more than one Potential Supplier may be shared with all Potential Suppliers.

## **7. CONTRACT TERMS**

- 7.1 The contract will be awarded subject to our standard terms and conditions, which can be found [here](#).
- 7.2 TNA reserves the right not to award and to complete its objectives through other means.