**Arts Council England Invitation to Tender**

Title: **Development and delivery of E-newsletter campaign**

Reference number**:ART011-0047**

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: **12 noon on 20 March 2015**

**Background**

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.

We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries - from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.

Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better.

Between 2011 and 2015, we will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government and an estimated £0.85 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the count

**Section 1: Arts Council England’s Requirements**

1. **Introduction**

Arts Council England currently has 16,000 subscribers that have signed up to receive updates and news from the Arts Council England. Our current communications with subscribers are currently limited and are focused on corporate announcements and funding news.

To enable us to develop the new content plan for the e-newsletter we will be undertaking a research project, outside of this tender, to understand the type, style and format of content that the target audience wants to receive via an Arts Council e-newsletter. The research findings, evidence and recommendations for the content structure will be shared with the successful service provider to inform the development of the E-Newsletter campaign.

The Arts Council are seeking a service provider that will develop and deliver E-newsletter campaign as set out in this ITT.

1. **Aims and Objectives**

Overall aims of the E-newsletter campaign are as follows:

* to reach and engage with a broader range people across the arts and cultural sector
* to build and strengthen those relationships through engaging them with content that supports their work
* to celebrate and tell the story about the value of arts and culture to encourage our target audiences to actively advocate for it

The objectives for the E-newsletter campaign are as follows:

* to develop strong aesthetic and editorial content which enables us to tell the story of the value of arts and culture (and public investment in it), as well as supporting the work of artists and arts organisation via useful, relevent content
* to develop a calendar of engaging, sharable and compelling e-newsletter content that will be targeted to the individual subscriber using dynamic content (e.g. by area, artform, funded, or non-funded)
* to design and develop 6 engaging and highly creative email templates that build brand awareness and trust and deepen engagement levels with us and our content

1. **Scope of services**

Arts Council England is seeking to appoint a service provider that will develop, design, and produce the new e-newsletter communications and content.

The following services are required:

1. **Editorial/copy writing support for the production of each bi-monthly newsletter**.

This service provider will be required to provide the following (including but not limited) services:

* work closely with the project lead to generate, research and develop story ideas into inspiring and engaging stories that will create dialogue and talk ability
* develop a mixture of regular features that give the newsletter a consistent feel and engage with our audiences along with short bite sized content from top tips, quotes, images, news and also guest editorial spots

1. **Development of the creative approach and delivery of the e-newsletter templates and associated collateral**

This service provider will be required to provide the following (including but not limited) services:

* develop an over-arching creative approach that reflects our values and in line with our brand. The creative concept needs to work with our advocacy toolkit and Create publication and our overall brand guidelines/digital/web look and feel
* deliver 6 stylish, magazine style e-newsletter templates (that will be accessible web, mobile and tablet friendly html) that are adapted to reflect the content of that issue
* deliver 2 editable templates that can be used in-house for e-communications that fall outside of the e-newsletter communications calendar
* delivery of associated collateral (web banners) for the e-newsletter re-engagement/launch campaign

1. **E-newsletter campaign evaluation services**

This service provider will be required to provide the following (including but not limited) services:

* production of an evaluation and impact report at the end of the year (after 6 issues) to include top line campaign metrics and analysis of the impact that e-newsletters have had in achieving our overarching aims

*Target audiences*

The audiences that Arts Council England want to engage and build relationships with through this e-newsletter include artists and the broad cultural sector.

Estimates of the size of these audiences demonstrate the scale of the opportunity, and also the challenge:

* around 89,000 people work as artists in the UK
* around 100,000 people work in the arts and culture sector in England
* 660 politicians in Westminster; 20,000 in local government in England
* over a million people volunteer in the arts in England

In addition the aim is to build relationships with:

* local authorities
* education sector

Arts Council England welcomes highly creative and imaginative proposals to deliver the Services and proposals that can demonstrate an understanding of ACE’s brand and ACE’s passion to advocate the value and benefit of arts and culture and how ACE can communicate this through creative design and editorial.

Tender proposals are welcomed from groups of organisations/consortiums. Where a group of companies are bidding jointly for this Contract, they will need to have in place a robust partnership agreement outlining the individual roles and responsibilities of each in relation to the delivery of the Contract. Arts Council England will need to see a copy of this agreement as part of the tender process. When such consortium tenders are submitted, a lead bidder needs to be clearly identified as it will be with them that the Contract will be held and they will be the contractor and ultimately be accountable for its overall delivery

*Useful weblinks*

Further details on Arts Council England brand guidelines, stakesholder focus research and online advocy materials are available online on the website. Please refer to our [brand guidelines](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/who-we-are/supplying-arts-council/brand-identity-guidelines/), our [stakeholder focus research](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Stakeholder_focus_research_April_2014.pdf), and our [online advocacy materials](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/value-arts-and-culture/advocacy-toolkit/).

*Project timetable/deliverables*

The indicative timetable for the E-newsletter campaign development and delivery is:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverable/activity** | **Due date** |
| Inception Meeting | **1 April 2015** |
| E-newsletter templates (6) developed | **April 2015** |
| E-newsletters sent out regularly | **May 2015**  **July 2015**  **Sept 2015**  **November 2015**  **January 2016**  **March 2016** |
| Evaluation report | **May 2016** |

*Duration of Contract*

The duration of the Contract is 13 months starting from April 2015.

*Escalation Procedures*

In the event of a major problem, a list of contacts will be required to manage any problem to a successful conclusion.

*Account management*

In performing the services required under this contract the service provider will report to **Andrea Lingley** (Head of Marketing and Communications). Please specify in your proposal the named individual who will be responsible for the account management of this contract on behalf of your organisation.

*Contract value*

The estimated value of all services required under this ITT for the term of 13 months shall not exceed £18,240 inclusive VAT and expenses and in accordance with the following:

* + **Cost for Editorial/copy writing support for 6 issues over the contract term** shall not exceed £5,040 inclusive VAT and expenses. ACE estimates that the price per issue will be in the range from £500 to £700 plus VAT.
  + **Cost for Development of the creative approach and delivery e-newsletter templates, and associated collateral over the contract term** shall not exceed£8,400 inclusive VAT and expenses
  + **Cost for E-newsletter campaign evaluation services over the contract term** shall not exceed £4,800 inclusive VAT and expenses

Arts Council England reserves the right to extend this Contract for further 12 months and it estimates that the value of such extension shall not exceed £13,200 inclusive VAT and expenses.

*Payment Structure and billing requirements*

Arts Council England will pay on receipt of each deliverable or upon the completion of the services/part of services as agreed at the inception meeting.

**3. Procurement Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Procurement Activity** | **Date** |
| Publish ITT on Contracts Finder | 04 March 2015 |
| Deadline for clarification questions | 16 March 2015 |
| **Deadline for receipt of tender proposals** | **12 noon on 20 March 2015** |
| Initial review of tenders | Commencing from 20 March 2015 |
| Clarification meetings\* and moderate/finalise scores and identify preferred bidder | Week commencing 23 March 2015 |
| Contract commencement | 1 April 2015 |

\* ACE reserves the right to carry out clarifications via email or by inviting Bidders to a clarification meeting.

In order to ensure that both the ACE’s and Bidder’s resources are used appropriately, ACE will only invite the top two or three (depending on the closeness of scores) highest scoring bidders to attend a clarification meeting.

Scores will be moderated based on any clarifications provided during this meeting.

**Section 2: Evaluation criteria**

You are required to respond to **ALL** of the criteria below. To assist our evaluation of your tender submission, please ensure you clearly cross-refer your responses to the assigned numbers. Any relevant supporting tender documentation must also be clearly identifiable by a criteria number.

Initially we will evaluate your tender to see if you meet our **minimum PASS/FAIL CRITERIA** set out below.Bidders who do not pass all the Pass/Fail criteria (A-F) below will be excluded from further consideration in the competition (i.e. their tenders will not be evaluated further and will be excluded from the competition).

**PASS/FAIL CRITERIA**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Pass Fail Criteria A** | PASS/FAIL |
| The Arts Council requires the service provider to have and provide evidence of a minimum of 3 years’ experience in successfully delivering similar services including:   * the design, artwork and print of publications of a similar size and type; and * the design of online content   Please provide evidence of 3 years’ experience of undertaking similar projects successfully and supporting references demonstrating this.Please provide examples of two previous projects your organisation has been commissioned to develop and deliver.  Please provide contact details of your referees so the Arts Council will be able to contact them to confirm the accuracy of the information provided.  ***(Word limit – 500 words)*** |  |
| **Pass Fail Criteria B** |  |
| The Bidder’s total Fixed and Firm Costs for meeting all ACE’s requirements as set out in Section 1 do not exceed **£18,240** inclusive of VAT and all expenses. Bidders whose costs exceed this amount will be excluded from further consideration in the tender process. |  |

**If you pass all of the pass/fail criteria set out above, we will evaluate your tender response using the quality and price criteria which are set out below.**

**QUALITY CRITERIA (70%)**

The table below gives the criteria that will be used to evaluate the quality of the tender proposals received.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Criteria** | **Weighting** |
| 1 | Please set out your detailed proposals for delivering all requirements as set out in Section 1 to time and to budget.  Your response should include:   * A proposal for the number of pieces of content that will be delivered per issue within the budget set out for Editorial/copy writing support; * A topline plan of the research and evaluation methods you will undertake and a realistic project timetable * An indicative timetable of activity for the duration of the contract. | 40 |
| 2 | Please detail the delivery team that you propose to deliver the Contract including their relevant skills and capacity | 15 |
| 3 | Please provide us with details of your quality assurance and monitoring procedures. | 10 |
| 4 | Please set out the risks to delivering this Contract successfully and your proposals for mitigating them. | 5 |
|  | Total maximum available scores | 350 |

Each criterion will be scored using the methodology in the table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0 | Very Poor | No response or partial response and poor evidence provided in support of it.  Does not give Arts Council England confidence in the ability of the Bidder to deliver the Contract and/or our requirements are not met in most respects. |
| 1 | Weak | Response is supported by a weak standard of evidence in some areas giving rise to concern about the ability of the Bidder to deliver the Contract and/or our requirements are not met in some respects. |
| 2 | Satisfactory | Response is satisfactory and supported by a satisfactory standard of evidence. Gives Arts Council England confidence in the ability of the bidder to deliver the contract, meets the requirements in most respects. |
| 3 | Good | Response is comprehensive and supported by good standard of evidence. Gives Arts Council England a high level confidence in the ability of the Bidder to deliver the contract and meets Arts Council England ’s requirements. |
| 4 | Very Good | Response is comprehensive and supported by a very good standard of evidence meeting Arts Council England requirements and may exceed them in some respects. Gives Arts Council England a very good level of confidence in the ability of the Bidder to deliver the contract. |
| 5 | Exceptional | Response is very comprehensive and supported by a high standard of evidence. Gives Arts Council England a very high level of confidence in the ability of the Bidder to deliver the contract.  May exceed Arts Council England’s requirements in several respects. |

**PRICE CRITERIA (30%)**

30 marks will be awarded to the lowest priced bid and the remaining bidders will be allocated scores based on their deviation from this figure. Your fixed and firm total costs figure including VAT and expenses submitted in Schedule of Charges, Table A will be used to score this question.

For example, if the lowest price is £100 and the second lowest price is £108 then the lowest priced bidder gets 30% (full marks) for price and the second placed bidder gets 27.6% and so on. (8/100 x 30 = 2.4 marks; 30 – 2.4 = 27.6 marks)

**The bidder with the highest score when the quality and price marks are added up will be the preferred bidder.**

# **Schedule of Charges**

VAT is chargeable on the services to be provided and this will be taken into account in the overall cost of this procurement contract.

Bidders shall complete the schedule of charges Table A below estimating the number of days and travel and subsistence costs associated with their bid. The total fixed price will be inclusive of VAT and inclusive of expenses and all costs to be incurred.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | | **Role Description and Day Rate** | | | **Total Days** | **Total Firm and Fixed Price shall not exceed (£)** |
| **TABLE A:** | | | **e.g. Project Manager/ Director [name individual]** | **e.g. Researcher**  **[name individual]** | **Other**  **[name individual]** |
|  | | | ***e.g. £500*** | **e.g. £300** | **e.g. £200** |  |  |
|  | |  | ***Quantity*** | | |  |  |
| Inception meeting | |  | *e.g. 0.5* | *1* | *1.5* | *3* | *850* |
| **Please include any other deliverables you are proposing to meet our requirements in section 1.** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Travel and subsistence | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other (non-staff) costs –  *Please specify* | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *[Add as necessary]* | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Sub-total** | | | | | | | £ |
| **VAT** | | | | | | |  |
| **Total Fixed Price including VAT and expenses shall not exceed (this figure will be used for the purposes of allocating your score for the price criterion)** Please note: bids that exceed £18,240 for all the services (including VAT and expenses) will be excluded from this tender process as unaffordable. | | | | | | | £ |

Notes: Arts Council England reserves the right to reject abnormally low tenders.

You should not submit additional assumptions with your pricing submission. If you submit assumptions you will be asked to withdraw them. Failure to withdraw them will lead to your exclusion from further participation in this competition.

**Section 3: Instructions to tenderers**

Please submit your tender offer in accordance with all of the instructions, requirements and specifications set out in this ITT.

You must treat these documents and any further information provided by Arts Council England as confidential at all times and only disclose them if necessary to prepare a compliant response to the tender.

Nothing in the enclosed documentation or appendixes, or any other communication made between Arts Council England and any other party, can be considered a contract or agreement at this stage.

**Compliance**

Arts Council England reserves the right to disqualify or reduce the evaluation score of any tenderers who do not fully comply with the requirements in the tender documentation, in particular the closing time and date.

If you propose alternative goods or services for consideration, you must clearly mark these as non-compliant. Arts Council England reserves the right to reject any proposals with non-compliant alternatives. Tenders that are received are not automatically accepted.

The Arts Council’s standard terms and conditions for services will form part of the contract to be awarded. These can be downloaded and reviewed from our website: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Contract_for_Services_over_10K_v1_March_2012.pdf>

The Arts Council may also require further terms to be included in the contract that are specific to the successful supplier‘s application. **The Preferred Supplier will not be permitted to enter into any negotiations on the terms of the Contract. Any attempt to negotiate amendments will breach the terms of this ITT and will result in the Preferred Supplier being excluded from the tender process. In such circumstances Arts Council England reserves the right to invite the next highest scoring Bidder to enter into the Contract.**

Please note that Arts Council England is required to publish online the final awarded contract and any associated documentation. If you have any concerns about the future publication of sensitive information you should raise these within your tender proposal, highlighting which areas within your proposal you consider may be subject to exemption, and subsequent redaction, in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). More information about FOIA can be found at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

**Validity of offer**

Please note that by submitting a tender response for consideration you are confirming that, as an officer for the company/organisation that you represent, you have read and understood the tender documents and that your offer to Arts Council England is open for acceptance for 60 days from the tender closing date.

**Tendering**

Arts Council England reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to cancel or suspend this tender process at any time and for any reason. If we need to do this we will notify you in writing as soon as reasonably practicably.

Arts Council England is not responsible, and will not pay for any expenses or losses you incur during, but not limited to, the tender preparation, site visits, or clarification meetings.

**Information and questions**

If you need us to clarify the documentation or if you have further questions regarding the tender process, write to Guy Taylor at [guy.taylor@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:guy.taylor@artscouncil.org.uk) and quote the tender reference number ART011-0047. We will try to respond to reasonable requests for further information within the timescale of the tender.

Arts Council England reserves the right to advise all other tenderers of material questions and the answers supplied without disclosing the source of the enquiry. These will be issued via the Contracts Finder website (https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder) if the contract value is estimated to be above £10k including VAT. It is the bidder’s responsibility to check the website regularly for any clarifications.

## Return of Tender

You must complete and submit your tender response electronically to [guy.taylor@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:guy.taylor@artscouncil.org.uk) by the tender response deadline of **12 noon on 20 March 2015.**

In your tender response, clearly indicate the names and addresses of any sub-contractors you intend to use to provide the services and the scope of work you will employ them for.

The Arts Council is not responsible if all or part of your tender is not received. You should use a traceable dispatch system. In the event of a dispute, you are responsible to prove the tender was delivered.

**Post-tender clarifications**

Arts Council England reserves the right to ask you to attend a post-tender clarification meeting.

Arts Council England reserves the right to conduct post-tender clarifications with one or more tenderers depending on the closeness of a bidder’s score to the highest scoring bidder.