CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS – 5PM (UK TIME), FRIDAY 26TH AUGUST 2022

CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

The National Archives has received a number of clarification questions relating to this opportunity. Those questions, and their associated responses, can be found below.

Q1: In your open invitation you apply a weighting of 50% to the contract price. This is evaluated from fully inclusive day rates for a minimum of five roles: Consultant, Senior Developer, Junior Developer, Project Manager and Technical Specific Roles. However, in statement 4.2 you state that "We envisage the potential supplier will operate on a fixed cost per engagement basis within agreed terms and conditions based on delivery of a defined piece of work." This appears to be fixed outcome/fixed price engagements, such as "provide a price for the creation of this MVP" or "provide a cost to integrate our Azure AD with our new system". Can you explain why you're evaluating bidders on T&M rates when you won't be working in this way?
A1: We are not evaluating bidders on T&M rates, we are evaluating on a fixed consultancy charge based on the specific roles. Any subsequent works will be a fixed price engagement based on those consultancy charges.

Q2: We have located your "Digital Strategy 2017-2019", is there a newer one available?
A2: This is our most recent published Digital Strategy. This requirement is for IT Operations and not Digital Services. Please see the published FOI linked below for more information:

[ICT plans and strategy documents - Freedom of Information (nationalarchives.gov.uk)](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Q3: In 4.5 you state "The potential supplier must provide system health checks for existing and proposed solutions so that best practice implementations can be achieved, thereby optimising our investment in IT", this is fine but could you provide details of the systems that require health checks and whether these are just physical systems or if they are intangible ones also – for example, your agile development systems.

A3: The types of systems are included in the descriptions within the ITT under section 4.6 and they are IT systems rather than Business systems.

Q4: In 5.4.2 you state "What resourcing commitments you are making, the skills of the staff involved and what resourcing commitments you require TNA to make". This is very hard to do with no indication of the requirements of TNA over the next 2+1+1. How much of a commitment do TNA require? Do you need a bench of immediately available candidates or will there be enough lead time for each requirement to hold less of a bench (and therefore be cheaper). Likewise, it's difficult to suggest which staff we'd use (and therefore provide details of their skills) without some more details of the planned work for TNA.

A4: Please disregard this request as it is not required and should have been removed from the ITT.

Q5: You ask for details of full and half days, are half days likely? Will they be required on site?

A5: There may be a need for half days and these may be required to be on site or remote and will be negotiated at the time depending on the type of work.

Q6: Will TNA accept an innovative bid in addition to a compliant bid for this requirement?

A6: We will accept an innovative bid in addition to a compliant. Please note section 4.9 on our ITT.

"TNA recognises the benefits of innovative solutions in meeting its objectives and suppliers are encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to deliver innovation within their solutions."

Q7: You explain that you require expenses to be included in the day rates provided – could you therefore provide an indicator of the expected split between remote work and on-site work? If there is a significant amount of remote work, it would be cheaper for TNA to not include expenses.

A7: We cannot provide a split, your price should include expenses. We will only include a bid that will include expenses.

Q8: In 5.5, you state "Your proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA). Please ensure that in describing the proposed SLA, you specify what reporting you will put in place to demonstrate if and how your SLA commitments are being met. Please also ensure that you describe how you will address any failure to meeting your SLA commitments. " Without further information, this is difficult to answer I'm afraid. What SLA does the TNA require? What has it used in the past? What reporting does TNA need? Is the SLA based on how quickly people are available? SLAs are only effective when they are tied to something that TNA cares about – so what would you like it to be tied to?

A8: Please disregard our request for SLA information. This is not required and should have been removed from the ITT.

Q9: In the attached spreadsheet, you detail some R numbers. Could you clarify their relevance?

A9: The R numbers are simply a reference i.e. Requirement 1. There is no relevance to the roles.

Q10: Not all Consultants, Senior Developers, Junior Developers and Project Managers are created equal. Ordinarily, a benchmark (most commonly SFIA levels) is used to determine an equal level. Could TNA provide guidance about which level of grade you require for each role? The price difference between level 4 and level 7 for example, is significant, so this way everyone can provide equal pricing.

A10: Please submit your bid based on the price for those roles as you see fit.

Q11: I note in The National Archives requires a firm price (i.e. including expenses) but I can find no reference to annual adjustments to pricing in line with inflation in your terms. Will TNA allow annual price increases in line with inflation?

A11: We require a fixed price for the duration of the contract. Any inflation or envisaged amendments to rates during this time should be factored into the rates proposed.

Q12: 4.6.3: Will support be required for existing off the shelf or bespoke software? If so, please provide a list of software in use.

A12: This request is for development rather than a support contract. We will require development support on the specific software mentioned within the ITT. Any bespoke software will be discussed on a case by case basis.

Q13: 5.3.4: Apart from the software support referred to in section 4.6.3, is anything else in scope for support services?

A13: Not at this time

Q14: 5.4.2: With regards to resource commitments, is there a roadmap of planned technology projects? What are the roles/skillsets of the current TNA team?
A14: Please see below for a link to our FOI which discusses our current IT Strategy:
ICT plans and strategy documents - Freedom of Information (nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Q15: 5.6: How will the Contract Price for comparison be calculated for each supplier, given that each supplier will be listing different technical specialists in Appendix A? Is there a limit to the number of technical specialists that can be listed?
A15: The evaluation will be based on the specialities listed in Appendix A – costs for these are required as a minimum. Any additional technical specialities can be listed but this will be on an information only basis and will not form part of the evaluation score.

Q16: Section 4.8 – Security Requirements – are there any security clearance requirements for people working on this project, pls share more details about this.
A16: We do not have any security clearance requirements for this part of the tender process. We may, however, need clearance for specific projects in future .

Q17: Section 5.4 – Could you please confirm if response could be provided in powerpoint presentation or word document or a mix of both. Is there any preference.
A17: We have no preference for the format of the response. We just require that Appendix A is submitted as a minimum.

Q18: Section 5.7 – Service location, can the services be provided from offshore locations (for eg India) as well or is it Onshore UK only.
A18: We can envisage that there will be times when we will require onsite meetings for particular projects and therefore we cannot rule out to work in the UK.

Q19: In your requirement section you have 4.6.1, 4.6.2 and 4.6.3, if we are only able to provide one of these services are we able to still submit a tender or are you looking for a company that could ideally supply all 3 services?

A19: On the scoring for quality within our evaluation criteria, companies that are able to support all 3 are likely to score higher but we will accept bids for supply for less than the 3 listed services.

Q20: Regarding point 5.5 '...ensure that you describe how you will address any failure'. We can show you our SLA structure when we support commissioned software for our clients. We do have a table describing our resolution/response time in case of software failure but since we do not know the specific software we are going to deliver, we are unable to commit with exact resolution/response times (certain case we do less time other cases we may need more time to solve a software failure). Is that ok, we show the table and we say that we would discuss appropriate times for the specific software we are going to deliver?
A20: *Please disregard our request for SLA information. This is not required and should have been removed from the ITT.*

Q21: Regarding point 5.7 : our understanding is that price is given by the rate cords of the various roles, so there is not a overall price. Is that correct? Or are you asking to provide a price for a 'team' of resources (so we make an assumption on the team composition)?
A21: *We are asking for a rate card for each role that will be a fixed price during the contract duration.*

Q22: Do you allow remote working? or all the services have to be performed from Kew? In case you allow remote working resources, can we expand Appendix A with 2 rates one fully remote and one on premise?
A22: *We can envisage that there will be a requirement for onsite visits and therefore cannot be solely remote working.*

Q23: The tender document refers to a Strategic Partner that must be able to provide professional services for at least one of the areas detailed in section 4.6. Can TNA provide guidance as to how bids will be assessed and scored, particularly if a supplier cannot meet all the areas listed in section 4.6?
A23: *Suppliers will be assessed based on their ability to support TNA in the specified services. Suppliers who are able to support in all areas would score higher during the evaluation process and will be evaluated on their price.*

Q24: While the tender document refers to a single Partner, will TNA consider a multi-company award based on suppliers' ability to cover the areas listed in section 4.6?
A24: *Our agreement is with one partner and we will not stipulate how the partner delivers these services. How the partner delivers the services should be included in their proposal and will be evaluated accordingly.*

Q25: Can TNA provide an indication of how much work it is anticipated will require an on-site presence?

A25: We cannot provide an indication of how much work is going to be required on-site but we do envisage that there will be some visits to our Kew, Richmond site.

Q26: Is it expected that the TNA IT Operations team will conduct any required installation work on-site?

A26: We cannot categorically confirm that the TNA IT Operations team will conduct installation works however this will be determined on a case by case basis.

Q27: Could you explain the deadlines that TNA intend to use are and what their requirements are expected to be for scaling up and down?

A27: Deadlines are agreed at a time when a project is discussed on a cases by case basis. We would like a supplier to show that they can scale up and down depending on the size of a project and bidders should explain how they will meet that requirement. Bidders should demonstrate their available resources to support their ability to scale up and down – e.g. number of available staff through direct employment, partnership or subcontracting.