

26.02.2024	The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU	THE	
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Invitation to Tender

Title: Refresh of the government’s vision for archives

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 5pm (UK time), 15 March 2024

Return to: procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk

1 Introduction

This invitation to tender specifies the requirements for the provision of support to The National Archives to refresh Archives Unlocked, the government’s vision for archives.

The following further details are outlined in this document:

- The service to be provided
- Anticipated timetable for the programme
- The information to be provided by tenderers
- The terms of business relating to the award of any contract

2 Background

2.1 Organisation

The National Archives is a non-ministerial UK government department, sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The Chief Executive of The National Archives is the statutory Keeper of Public Records. The National Archives is the official archive and publisher for the UK government and guardians of over 1,000 years of iconic national documents. We also perform the Historical Manuscripts Commission's functions in relation to private records. Archives can be used in a variety of ways, from enabling insightful and pioneering research, and inspiring art and literature, to informing decision making in all types of organisations.

Part of its purpose is to ensure sustained or improved preservation of and access to the nation's archive collections across the private, public and voluntary sectors. Since 2011, The National Archives has held leadership responsibilities for the archives sector in England and the Archive Sector Leadership department (ASL) supports the whole sector, comprising over 2500 archives. Our work is framed by the strategic vision, *Archives Unlocked*. Our approach to the leadership role is a collaborative one, supporting partnership working to encourage a sustainable and innovative archive sector. Archive Sector Leadership also collaborates internally with a variety of other departments as part of our commitment to embedding sector leadership in all parts of The National Archives. ASL draws on knowledge and expertise from teams across the organisation and works closely with the Grants and Funding Office (GFO) to offer grants to the archives sector. As leaders, we publish information on the location and nature of records, advise on their care, produce guidance and training for archive professionals and develop programmes to support the development of the sector.

[You can find more information about our role as sector lead on our website.](#)

2.2 The government's vision for archives

Over the coming months, we will collaborate with archive professionals, key stakeholders and strategic partners from the cultural, creative and digital sectors to refresh the government's vision for a self-sustaining, highly skilled and effective archive sector in England.

The government's ambitious strategic vision for the archives sector, [Archives Unlocked](#), was launched in 2017 and focuses on the needs and potential of archives across the country. The vision, and the priorities that emerge from it, are the result of extensive consultation and development work with the archives sector, our partners and beyond.

The core ambitions at the heart of the current vision are:

Trust: People and institutions trust in the authenticity of archive records, and how they are preserved and presented

Enrichment: Archives enhance and enrich our society intellectually, culturally and economically

Openness: Archives cultivate an open approach to knowledge and are accessible to all

Building on the core ambitions, our current strategic priorities are shaped by seven themes that have emerged over time:

- Advocacy and reputation
- Digital
- Diversity and inclusion
- Health and wellbeing
- Impact
- Innovation and risk
- Resilience

Having recently revised our leadership offer and issued a new [leadership statement](#), the time is now right to build on the success of the current vision Archives Unlocked. The refreshed vision will affirm our commitment to engage with the archive sector on shaping a new future for archives in England.

We will engage with our sector and stakeholders through a variety of methods including a survey, interviews and a series of roundtable events. Discussion will be structured around themes to be agreed with The National Archives.

3 Specification

The National Archives is seeking to appoint a supplier to provide support for its development of a refreshed vision. The suppliers will work closely with the relevant staff at The National Archives throughout the contract.

The focus of the supplier's work will be:

- establishing a firm evidence base through the production of a literature review and analysis of existing archive sector and appropriate cross-sector data
- engaging with the archives sector, key stakeholders and partners through a survey, series of regional roundtables, the Archives Unlocked Steering Group and selected face-to-face and telephone interviews. This work will be informed by findings from the initial research phase
- production of a report that summarises the findings from the literature review, data analysis and sector engagement work and explains the direction and content of the refreshed vision

The supplier will also write a draft of the refreshed vision document.

4 Methodology

We would like the potential supplier to set out proposals that will meet the aims of the brief and components of work as set out in section 3.

Given the size of our sector and number of stakeholders, sampling or surveys will need to be managed by the supplier appropriately. Your proposal should provide detail on your approach to sampling, data collection including information rights - in particular data protection - and analysis.

5 Considerations

The suppliers will work closely with The National Archives staff throughout, and The National Archives will identify a lead officer for the work.

The National Archives will:

- provide the suppliers with access to relevant literature, research reports and data that it holds
- support the suppliers in sampling and identifying stakeholders and interviewees, using its existing sector knowledge and segmentation, and its stakeholder mapping
- work with the supplier to secure locations for the roundtables, and to meet venue, catering and other associated costs (to be agreed at the time).

6 Outputs

6.1 The following outputs will be required:

- 6.1.1** evidence base from the literature review and data analysis
- 6.1.2** a set of research data from the sector engagement work, including the interviews and roundtables, to be stored in a readily accessible electronic format. The format of this will be agreed with the supplier in advance.
- 6.1.3** written report of the findings and recommendations
- 6.1.4** draft document of the government's refreshed vision for archives for formal consultation

6.2 Notes on outputs

All outputs are to include appendices as agreed between The National Archives and the supplier. The contents, structure and format of the refreshed vision for archives are to be agreed in advance of writing, and whether an executive summary will be produced for publication on our website.

For the avoidance of doubt, The National Archives will own the final draft document. The National Archives will acknowledge the work and contribution of the consultant/contractor in the final document, but The National Archives reserves the right to amend, change or edit the draft in light of stakeholder and ministerial feedback.

7 Skills and Experience

The successful supplier should possess, or be able to access, the specialist knowledge, skills and expertise required to deliver this work.

This should include:

- knowledge of archives sector and the environments it operates within
- awareness of government policy, processes and implementation and an understanding that the vision contributes to wider ministerial objectives
- previous experience of supporting vision or strategy development
- knowledge of methodologies for evidence metrics in the creative and cultural sectors (collection, analysis and dissemination)
- research and analytical skills, appropriate to our literature review and data analysis needs, including running and analysing a survey
- facilitation and consultation skills, including conducting purposeful interviews
- expertise in presenting complex data in a compelling manner
- expertise in writing concise reports and clear and inspiring vision documents

8 Project timetable

The suppliers will carry out the initial phase of research and engagement, which will conclude in July 2024. The next phases will include production of a findings report and a draft refreshed vision.

The National Archives will send this draft refreshed vision for approval by The National Archives' board and ministerial endorsement (outside the timescale for this project) with the refreshed vision envisaged to come into force in early 2025.

The project timetable which the appointed supplier will need to meet is as follows:

Initial meeting	Early April 2024
Literature review and data analysis (Output 6.1.1)	By end of April 2024
Publish provocation for the archives sector to respond to. Open bookings for roundtables and open a survey as an additional feedback method	By mid-May 2024
Engagement with sector and stakeholders through roundtables and interviews	May to mid-July 2024
Interim progress update meeting	Mid-June 2024
Collation of research data from sector engagement (Output 6.1.2)	By end of July 2024
Analysis of all data to produce a concise report on findings and recommendations for the refreshed vision (Output 6.1.3)	By mid-August
The National Archives will publish part or all of this report on its website to enable the sector to stay updated and sense check the direction of the vision.	Late August – early September
Final draft of the refreshed vision (Output 6.1.4)	End of September 2024

The National Archives may extend the contract with the appointed supplier for any additional support of the delivery this refreshed vision.

9 Procurement process

All correspondence related to this tender must be via procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk only. Please ensure that you include 'Refresh of the government's vision for archives' in the subject line of your email and adhere to all deadlines specified in Section 9.1.

The National Archives reserves the right not to appoint and to achieve the outcomes of the evaluation through other methods.

9.1 Procurement timetable

The procurement timetable is as follows:

Date(s)	Description
26 February 2024	Publish Invitation To Tender
5pm 4 March 2024	Deadline for receipt of clarification questions
5pm 15 March 2024	Deadline for tenders to be submitted
5pm 26 March 2024	Complete initial evaluation of tenders
4 or 5 April 2024	Possible interviews with short-listed suppliers
5 April 2024	Final evaluation complete
9 April 2024	All suppliers informed of outcome
Week commencing 15 April 2024	Set up meeting

9.2 Proposal content

Your proposal for undertaking the work must include:

- 9.2.1** a detailed methodology for undertaking the work. Please ensure in this part of your submission that you address information rights and data protection.
- 9.2.2** details of staff allocated to the project, together with experience of the supplier and staff members in carrying out similar projects. The project manager / lead contact must be identified
- 9.2.3** a timescale for carrying out the project
- 9.2.4** an overall cost for completing the work described in Section 8 of this document, plus a detailed breakdown of days and day rates for each individual involved

9.3 Budget

The anticipated budget is a maximum of £30,000 excluding VAT but including all other taxes and expenses.

9.4 Evaluation

a) We will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

Evaluation Category	Weighting	Evaluation Criteria
The quality of the methodology and methods of data analysis	25%	Scoring of Supplier’s response to section 9.2.1 of this document, applying the quality criteria detailed below
Demonstrated knowledge and experience in response to section 7	20%	Scoring of Supplier’s response to section 9.2.1 and 9.2.2
The proposed team composition and management	10%	Scoring of Supplier’s response to section 9.2.2
The extent to which the tender demonstrates an understanding of the brief	25%	Scoring of Supplier’s response to section 9.2.1 and 9.2.3 of this document, applying the quality criteria detailed below
Cost	20%	Scoring of Supplier’s response to section 9.2.4

10 Points	<p>Outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Supplier has provided a response that addresses all parts of the requirement. • Potential Supplier has provided evidence to support all elements of their response. • The evidence supplied is convincing and highly relevant to the requirement. • Potential Supplier’s response is clear and easy to understand. • Where relevant, Potential Supplier has demonstrated a high level of capability to deliver new and innovative service approaches.
7 Points	<p>Good:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Supplier has provided a response that addresses all parts of the requirement. • Potential Supplier has provided evidence to support most elements of their response. • The evidence supplied is good and relevant to the requirement. • Potential Supplier’s response is clear and easy to understand.

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

b) Price scores will be evaluated as follows:

The bidder submitting the lowest compliant price will be awarded the maximum of 10 (unweighted) points. All other bidders will be awarded a (unweighted) points score by applying the following formula:

$$((\text{lowest submitted price}/\text{bidder's submitted price}) * 10)$$

To illustrate this via a worked example:

Bidder 1 submits a price of £10,000

Bidder 2 submits a price of £17,000

Bidder 3 submits a price of £31,000

Bidder 1 is awarded 10 (unweighted) points $-\left(\frac{10,000}{10,000}\right) * 10 = 10$

Bidder 2 is awarded 5.88 (unweighted) points $-\left(\frac{10,000}{17,000}\right) * 10 = 5.88$

Bidder 3 is awarded 3.23 (unweighted) points $-\left(\frac{10,000}{31,000}\right) * 10 = 3.23$

After scoring written submissions, we propose to shortlist no more than 4 suppliers for interview. After interview, those shortlisted submissions will be re-scored, taking the findings of the interview into account.

10 Terms and conditions

The supplier will be required to sign a contract agreeing to The National Archives' standard terms and conditions [of contract for services](#). Please do not propose any other terms and conditions in response to this tender. Additionally, the following clauses will apply:

- 10.1** The supplier agrees to assign to the Crown any copyright in material created in the delivery of the outcomes described in Section 6 of this Invitation To Tender.
- 10.2** The supplier shall take appropriate steps to ensure that neither the supplier nor any staff is placed in a position where, in the reasonable opinion of The National Archives, there is or may be an actual conflict, or a potential conflict, between the pecuniary or personal interests of the supplier and the duties owed to The National Archives under the provisions of the contract. The supplier will disclose to The National Archives full particulars of any such conflict of interest which may arise.
- 10.3** The National Archives reserves the right to terminate the contract immediately by notice in writing and/or to take such other steps it deems necessary where, in the reasonable opinion of The National Archives, there is or may be an actual conflict, or a potential conflict, between the pecuniary or personal interests of the Contractor and the duties owed to The National Archives under the provisions of the contract. The actions of The National Archives pursuant to this clause shall not prejudice or affect any right of action or remedy which shall have accrued or shall thereafter accrue to The National Archives.

The National Archives reserves the right not to award and to achieve it aims through other means.