



THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

REVIEW AND REFRESH OF ARCHIVE SERVICE ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME

INVITATION TO TENDER – OPEN COMPETITION

DEADLINE FOR TENDER SUBMISSIONS – 5PM (UK TIME), 10 APRIL 2023

1 ABOUT US

- 1.1 The National Archives is a non-ministerial government department. The Chief Executive of The National Archives is the statutory Keeper of Public Records who reports to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. We incorporate the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. We also perform the Historical Manuscripts Commission's functions in relation to private records.
- 1.2 TNA is the official archive and publisher for the UK government and guardians of over 1,000 years of iconic national documents. 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.
- 1.3 Since 2012 TNA has held the responsibility for leadership of the archives sector. 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.

- 1.4 The Archive Sector Development department (ASD) is responsible for leadership of the archive sector in England, 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.
- 1.5 The National Archives is one of seven partners who collaborate to deliver the [UK Archive Service Accreditation programme](#) as a management standard and awards programme for all types and sizes of UK archive service. The other partners are: Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland), Archives and Records Council Wales, National Records of Scotland, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Scottish Council on Archives and the Welsh Government. The programme is governed by a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between partners, and by a Committee composed of members nominated by partners and recruited from the archives sector. There is open communication with the parallel Museum Accreditation programme managed by Arts Council England.
- 1.6 Archive Service Accreditation was developed collaboratively through a co-creation process with archives across the UK in 2012-13. The first awards were made in November 2013. As the programme nears its 10th anniversary, the Accreditation programme partners want to review and update the programme through further sector co-creation, addressing areas which have been identified as requiring further focus, and ensuring its ongoing currency and utility across UK archives.

2 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The purpose of this procurement process is for The National Archives (TNA) on behalf of the Accreditation partners to select a supplier to review Archive Service Accreditation, recommend approaches to updating the programme, and to deliver updates
- 2.2 The work will take place across two phases. Please see Section 3 for details.
- 2.3 The overall budget is **£25000** to 31 March 2024. The budget for Phase 1 (consultation) is **£12500**. The remaining **£12500** will address Phase 2 (product development), with products and further work to be agreed at a decision point in autumn 2023. All figures herein are exclusive of VAT, but inclusive of travel and all other expenses.

3 REQUIREMENT

- 3.1 The supplier will design and deliver a research and consultation process to review and develop Archive Service Accreditation as a relevant, current national standard after 10 years of implementation. This will include extensive sector consultation and updating programme content and guidance to reflect emerging priority areas and to address areas for improvement.
- 3.2 In Phase 1, which must be completed by 30 September 2023, the supplier will work closely with the Accreditation team at The National Archives to:
- Undertake background research into four priority development areas (see 3.3) and other relevant material to enhance the Accreditation programme. A resource list is available (see separate document entitled 'Accreditation Review reference resources') of further reading and preliminary discussions with partners and sector on some elements, but it is expected that additional research will be required
 - Design consultation across partners and the wider archives sector, to review the programme content, securing effective representation of views from across the four home nations and types and scales of archive service
 - Ensure that the consultation design addresses the four identified priority areas for programme development, identifying ways forward for these to be reflected in Archive Service Accreditation
 - Ensure that the consultation design is sufficiently robust to allow for identification of areas not already prioritised for improvement where these would be of benefit to the archives sector and to explore the mechanisms of the programme with a view to recommending any improvements
 - Deliver consultation as designed, including working with Accreditation partners to promote the activities across the archives sector in all home nations of the UK and ensuring that the Museum Accreditation team at Arts Council England are sighted on developments

- Use the results of consultation to develop recommendations for phase 2 in a short report identifying and costing further work areas, and present this for partner decisions on future work.

3.3 Initial discussions with programme partners, the Accreditation Committee and at sector gatherings have identified four substantive areas where some content change is likely to be required. The phase 1 consultation design should ensure that the ways that these themes are reflected and assessed in Accreditation and the potential for this to change are discussed in full.

- **Delivery of digital preservation:** the archives sector has made progress with policy, planning and staff awareness on digital preservation but the revised Accreditation standard and programme must support and assess delivery of preservation of content at risk of loss and increasingly at scale. There are many existing tools and options which Accreditation could reference in this area, and the review needs to find a meaningful, scalable approach to using these.
- **Inclusive practice:** the Accreditation partners have identified this as a priority for current work, and have made light updates to the programme since 2021. In 2023 a series of sector workshops based on external challenge have explored the issue further, and outcomes will be shared with the appointed supplier. The review in this area needs to embed inclusive practice across the programme in ways which work for all types and sizes of archive service.
- **Sustainability and carbon cost:** this is an emerging area of concern with archive services at different levels of engagement. The potential for some reflection of these issues in Accreditation should be explored.
- **Audience development and audience needs:** stakeholders are a vital part of Accreditation, with a whole module dedicated to engagement with archives. This has been identified as a less robust part of the standard, and one where the pandemic appears to have driven change in audience expectations and service priorities. The consultation should explore how Accreditation can develop in this area to support archives meeting stakeholder

needs effectively for the future.

It is recognised that the four areas are at different levels of maturity and will require different approaches and time commitment to review. However, the research and consultation design should include them all.

- 3.4 While partners are confident that the four thematic areas in 3.3 are of significant value in developing Archive Service Accreditation, the initial soundings which identified these do not constitute a full sector co-creation process. The consultation therefore also needs to welcome archive sector input in other areas of the programme, and be prepared to explore these in greater depth where appropriate. Initial discussions have identified potential for some aspects of programme delivery to be altered, such as the timing of reviews of Accredited status. Consultation should give some space for discussion of practical delivery as well as content of the programme.
- 3.5 Phase 2 will follow a decision point based on the Phase 1 report from partners and Committee (by 15 October 2023), and is therefore not committed at this stage. If Phase 2 proceeds, it must be completed by 31 March 2024. In this phase the supplier will:
- Complete supporting work packages as agreed at the decision point following Phase 1, working closely with the Accreditation Team at The National Archives. The detail of this delivery will vary depending on the outcomes of sector consultation but is likely to include:
 - Engaging the programme partners with the Memorandum of Understanding for a further period of partnership
 - Redrafting elements of the Accreditation standard to meet the needs of archive services of all types and sizes across the UK
 - Revising content/presentation across the supporting programme guidance, ensuring its currency, scalability, and usability, including reflection of the four priority areas and any other areas of improvement identified through consultation. Ensuring that these meet required standards of presentation and clarity so that future applicants are well supported.

- Identifying and incorporating appropriate reference points for changes to the standard, linking to external guidance and standards
- Creating improvement recommendations for programme implementation where these arise. The appointed supplier will not be responsible for implementation of programme delivery changes, which will be undertaken by the Accreditation team at The National Archives, in discussion with partners and the Committee.

It is acknowledged that if the archive sector wants to see substantial change in areas not already identified for development, phase 2 may not be sufficient to deliver all potential programme updates identified in phase 1. Decisions on priority areas for delivery by the appointed contractor will be made in October 2023 based on the Phase 1 report to shape Phase 2.

- 3.6 The programme partners wish to support the review throughout. Support will be given through regular contact with the Accreditation team at The National Archives, through partner communication channels and hosting online meetings/webinars where relevant. The supplier may wish to make use of key dates such as 18 May 2023 full Accreditation Committee; DCDC conference 11-13 July 2023, Archives and Records Association Conference 1-3 September 2023 and a presumed October 2023 Committee meeting to discuss phase 2.
- 3.7 The work must be completed and submitted to TNA by 30 September 2023 for Phase 1, and 31st March 2024 for Phase 2.

4 HOW TO RESPOND

- 4.1 If you have any clarification questions related to your response, please submit these to procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk by **5pm (UK time) on 30 March 2023**.
- 4.2 Please submit your response to procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk by **5pm (UK time) on 10 April 2023**.
- 4.3 It is for you to determine what format your submission should take so as to describe your offer in a clear, comprehensive and convincing fashion; however, you should note that the information you supply may be used, in whole or in part, to populate the Contract Schedules. As such, please make clear and unambiguous statements about the commitments you are making.
- 4.4 Your response should as a minimum include the following:
- 4.4.1 Your **understanding** of the project and deliverables, and how you would phase the deliverables across two financial years.
 - 4.4.2 Details of your prior **experience** suited to the project, including understanding the needs of the UK archive sector and how standards can support this, and of delivering high quality consultation and guidance products.
 - 4.4.3 Your proposed **methodology** for delivery of the project outcomes, in both Phases 1 and 2.
 - 4.4.4 Names and experience of **individuals** assigned to the project, and their involvement with each phase or unit of the work.
 - 4.4.5 **Your contract price**, for Phases 1 and 2 – including breakdown for costs of each phase or unit of work, day rate of each team member and other costs or expenses.

Please note your submitted pricing must include any and all duties and levies (except UK VAT, which should be excluded) which may be payable on your proposed solution as submitted. If some or all of your proposed

solution includes goods or services which are sourced from outside the UK, you must tell us (a) which goods/services are sourced from outside the UK, (b) the associated duties and levies payable and (c) confirmation that your contract price includes all such duties and levies (except UK VAT). For the avoidance of doubt, your pricing should reflect the equivalent of Incoterm DDP (Delivery Duty Paid) and therefore the full cost to the customer/TNA.

5 EVALUATION

5.1 Submissions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Category	Maximum Score Available	Weighting	Maximum Available Weighted Score
Your understanding of the project and deliverables	10	2	20
Details of your understanding of the specific needs of the archive sector and Accreditation standards	10	2.5	25
Your proposed methodology for the work	10	2.5	20
Names and experience of individuals assigned to the project, and their knowledge of the archives sector, standards and guidance.	10	2	15
Price	10	2	20

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 – $((10,000/10,000)*10) = 10$

Bidder 2 is awarded 5.88 (unweighted) points – $((10,000/17,000)*10) = 5.88$

Bidder 3 is awarded 3.23 (unweighted) points – $((10,000/31,000)*10) = 3.23$

5.2 Quality categories will be evaluated according to the table below:

10 Points	Outstanding: <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	Good: <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• Where relevant, Potential Supplier has demonstrated some level of capability to deliver new and innovative service approaches
4 Points	Average: <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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>1 Point</p>	<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

6 PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

6.1 The procurement timetable is as follows:

Ref.	Description	Date
1	Invitation to Tender published	21 March 2023
2	Deadline for Potential Suppliers to submit clarification questions to procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk *	5pm (UK time) 30 March 2023
3	Deadline for Potential Suppliers to submit Tender Responses to procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk	5pm (UK time) 10 April 2023
4	Timebox for interviews with shortlisted suppliers	19 to 25 April 2023
5	Contract award	By 28 April 2023

* 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.