Document Digitisation Request for Information

Date: February 2024

Version: 0.2

1. Introduction

1.1 The Environment Agency (EA) is England's a non-departmental regulatory body responsible for providing services to manage the UK's Environment. The organisation was established in 1996 and is sponsored by the United Kingdom government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

[Environment Agency Website](#)

1.2 The EA's Estates department is responsible for managing the EA's property, these responsibilities vary significantly depending on the property. To facilitate the requirements of the large and varied property portfolio, thousands of documents have been generated. Further information on our responsibilities and how we are structured can be found on our website.

1.3 Estates seeks to overhaul how the department stores critical documents to support current and future needs. The work carried out in this project will affect the delivery and integration of Estates new Asset Management system. The new Asset Management system underpins all the department's output, therefore the digitisation timeline of physical documents laid out below is essential for Estates to operate.

1.4 Estates stores *c.*32,000 Deeds and Active Case Files documents physically at either EA owned sites or through third parties. These documents are either business critical or support day to day operations of the organisation and therefore must be stored in a secure and accessible format to ensure BAU. As part of the EA's Digital Strategy, digitisation of these documents is seen as critical step in meeting the organisation's requirements.

2. Primary Outcomes

2.1 Undertake necessary steps to ensure sustainability for EA Estates current Document Records Management.

2.2. Digitisation of all 32,000 physical folders of Active Case Files and Deeds.

2.3 Environmental gains through business's efficiencies. I.e. Significantly reducing the Estates physical assets stored and carbon footprint.

3. The Requirement

NB: This is a request for information ONLY currently and not a notice of opportunity.

3.1 We are potentially seeking a third-party market leader support to Estates Digitisation Project to ensure all physical Deeds and Active Case Files documents are stored virtually on to the chosen Document Management System.

3.2 All EA department requirements will need to include both Active Case Files and Deeds. In addition to digitisation of the documents and to adhere to data protection guidelines, a fraction of the 10,000 Active Case File documents will be disposed of by the selected Supplier on-site.

3.3 The destruction will lead to a gradual decrease of storage area requirements throughout the EA. Greater efficiencies will be achieved through making data more

accessible and easier to locate. Other efficiencies will be achieved by appending virtual documents with metadata to make the documents discoverable, allowing internal diagnostics and greater interactivity with other platforms.

4. RFI Questions

4.1 General

4.1.1. Do you offer a physical destruction service? If yes, can you describe the service?

4.1.2. Can you describe how you would ensure secure Handling of information (physically & digitally) – preservation of original documents?

4.1.3. What actions does your organisation take to reduce carbon emissions, particularly in the production of products and end to end supply chain?

4.1.4. Can you describe how would you offer a secure courier service of hard and soft copies of documents to your facilities?

4.1.5. What factors would you foresee having the greatest impact on delivery?
  a. And what can you do to pre-empt/mitigate or overcome these factors?

4.1.6. What unique products or services does your company offer? Does your organisation offer any unique selling points?

4.2 Technical

4.2.1. Would your service be compliant with ISO Standards, if yes can you provide further details:
  a. ISO 23081-1:2017. Information and documentation — Records management processes.
  b. ISO 23081-2:2009. Information and documentation — Managing metadata for records.
  c. ISO/TR 23081-3:2011. Information and documentation — Managing metadata for records.

4.2.2. Can you describe how you would you plan a bulk scanning operation, where you would be required to scan a board range of documents in multiple formats?

4.2.3. A third of the documents are sensitive documents with specific handling instructions. How would you adapt your processes to accommodate this requirement?

4.2.4. Can you describe your scanning and digitising process for:
  a. Documents ranging from A0 to A5?
  b. Oversized or nonstandard document sizes i.e. larger than A0?

4.2.5. Can you describe what the digital product would look like? I.e.:
  a. What Metadata comes as a standard inclusion?
  b. What is the DPI resolution of the scans?
  c. What file format would you offer?

4.2.6. Do you offer any additional tools or features that you would use in digitisation? Do you use Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and Handwriting Character Recognition (HCR) or other Machine Learning (ML) technologies? If yes, please can you describe each additional tool?

4.2.7.   How long would you estimate the scanning of *c.*1,573,840 pages to take?

5. Next Steps

If you are interested in submitting a response to this request for information, please contact Defra Group Commercial on dgcofficesolutions@defra.gov.uk. We will respond to your email with the RFI questions listed above. The deadline for RFI responses is 12 noon Friday 22nd March 2024. All submissions should include responses to all the RFI requestions and must be in a MS word format.

6. Market Engagement Event

We are holding a market engagement event on Thursday 7th March 2024 10:00 – 10:45. This will be a virtual event via MS Teams and will be an opportunity for the market to meet the team who are leading on this area and to ask further questions about the RFI. If you wish to attend, please contact Defra Group Commercial on dgcofficesolutions@defra.gov.uk . Please identify 2 persons from your organisation to dial into the event and we will share the dial in details with those individuals.

We encourage suppliers to submit questions ahead of time to the mailbox above. The closing date for submitting questions is COP Monday 4th March 2024. The answers to these questions will be shared during the event. Any additional questions can be made on the day but please note the team may not be able to answers these on the call.