Exactly what services are you looking for?

As described in the ITT, the requirement is for the supplier's recruitment service to source and pre-screen qualified candidates (long list), and then hand over to TNA to take forward in terms of interviewing etc.

When do you expect the roles to be filled?

We expect all the roles to be filled within the six month contract period, and ideally within the first three months.

Will the appointed supplier have a nominated contact at TNA?

Yes, there will be a nominated lead at TNA who will manage this contract and will be the appointed supplier's day-to-day contact.

What do you mean by sub-contracting in the context of this requirement?

Sub-contracting in this context is where a bidder proposes to undertake some or all of the work via a third party, and not to undertake that work itself.

The ITT asks bidders to specify what standards it will adhere to in the delivery of the contract. What are these standards?

There are no pre-defined standards – it is for bidders to determine and describe what standards (if any) they will adhere to in the delivery of the contract.

What are the proposed contract terms and conditions?

It is for bidders to submit their proposed contract terms as part of their tender response. We are happy to contract under the appointed supplier's terms and conditions, provided they are fair and reasonable.

Is there a maximum word count or required format for tender responses?

There is no maximum word count or required format, but bidders should note the guidance in the ITT which states that "It is for potential suppliers to determine what format (their responses) should take so as to describe their offering in a clear, comprehensive and unambiguous fashion".

We note the use of the term 'contingent recruitment services'. Are the posts you're looking to fill permanent ones?

We anticipate these all being permanent contracts (with the possibility of some being fixed term if that suits business needs better at the time of recruitment), with the successful recruitment agency being appointed on a contingent (rather than retained) basis.

Will these posts be office based, remote working or hybrid working?

These will all be office-based contracts of employment, with any hybrid working pattern to be agreed between the employee and line manager. We anticipate any agreed hybrid working pattern to be along the lines of 2/3 days a week in the office, and 2/3 days a week remote.

Can the appointed supplier approach candidates as if they were TNA?

Whilst we would obviously expect the appointed supplier to declare that we are the employer for these roles, we would expect the supplier to approach candidates under their own name and branding and not to engage with candidates as if they are The National Archives.

What is the contract value?

Our maximum anticipated expenditure for this contract is specified in the tender document.

Will TNA be advertising these roles at the same time as the appointed supplier?

No.

What do you mean by terms of business?

Re. terms of business, we would expect to see two things in bidders' tender responses – your proposed contract terms and your proposed commercial offer (the latter of which we would expect to see articulated as a % commission for each role successfully filled). We will be happy to contract under the successful supplier's terms and conditions, subject to those terms being fair and reasonable.

How will you calculate the terms of business score?

The bidder submitting the lowest proposed commission percentage will be awarded the maximum available score for this category, with the other bidders being awarded lower scores that represent the degree to which their commission percentage is more expensive. By way of illustration:

- *3 bids are received, from Suppliers A, B & C.*
- *Supplier A submits a proposed commission percentage of 10%, which is the lowest received. Supplier A is therefore awarded the maximum available weighted score of 30.*
- *Supplier B submits a proposed commission percentage of 15%, which is 50% higher than Supplier A. Supplier B is therefore awarded a weighted score of 15.*

- *Supplier C submits a proposed commission percentage of 12.5%, which is 25% higher than Supplier A. Supplier C is therefore awarded a weighted score of 22.5.*

We believe that the salaries specified are below market rate

We are aware that some of the salaries may not be at full market rate, but they are the maximum we are able to offer within our pay structure. We would therefore expect the successful supplier to work with us in selling the wider benefits of working at The National Archives (for example, a generous civil service pension scheme).

Is there an incumbent supplier?

No.

What is your normal agency spend?

Re. commission fees, it is for bidders to submit their proposed terms of business within their tender responses. In the past, we have generally paid commissions of between 10% and 20% per role, depending on the number of roles being commissioned at any one time. For the volume of roles specified here, we would expect proposed commission rates to be very competitive.

Could you please outline both your candidate selection process and your interview process (i.e. is it competency-based or does it involve psychometric assessments?)

For these roles, it will be competency based interview and – for some of them, where appropriate – technical test(s).

In light of the pandemic, how much of your candidate selection process is conducted remotely/virtually v. on-site?

Most interviews are currently being carried out remotely. We anticipate this starting to change when current COVID restrictions start to be lifted.

Could you please provide a brief overview of your onboarding process?

This can vary by role, depending on seniority, level of security clearance needed etc. We will discuss specifics with the appointed supplier, but you may find some useful background reading here - https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/jobs/

What is the current situation regarding on-site working?

Onsite working is currently based on business need and personal circumstances. We anticipate most staff returning to the office when current COVID restrictions start to be lifted, initially on a hybrid basis.

Can we use your brand to engage candidates? e.g. using approved TNA-branded job adverts and candidate packs.

Yes, subject to your proposed application of the brand being approved by us in advance.

What is current size/headcount of your Digital Services team? An anonymised org chart would be beneficial to understand the leadership structure, and to see where the different roles highlighted in Appendix A align between each other, and the wider Digital Services team.

The Digital Services Directorate numbers approximately 60 people and is organised into multidisciplinary Service/Product teams. The roles to be recruited are not for a single team, they fit into a number of teams across the Directorate.

On extension of the above, it would be good to understand Developer teams size, for example, to understand the size of team the Lead Developer may be responsible for.

Each multidisciplinary team is small in size and includes 3-5 developers.

Appendix A references Scala, Java, Ruby, Python, C# as key technologies for the Developer roles, is this your key development stack or are there other languages as well that are a focus?

We operate a number of different systems, which are mainly built using these coding languages.

The briefing document references the programme of works focused on Digital Archiving Infrastructure and systems – Could you provide some further context on this, and any specific projects that fall within this?

This is the infrastructure that supports digital archiving and digital preservation. Many of our systems are bespoke.

Have you been to market for any of these roles so far – either directly or via an agency?

We have been to market for similar roles in the past.

What recruitment activity has taken place in the last 18 months across Digital Services, and what is the retention across Digital Services in particular.

We recruit regularly across Digital Services and we have relatively high retention.

Are these roles all newly created roles, or are some historical roles that have either been vacant/on hold?

The majority are newly created roles.

Appendix A references Agile ways of working extensively – How far is the Digital Services team on their agile journey?

The Digital Directorate has been working in an agile way for a number of years.