

Invitation to Tender: Tender and procurement bidding support for Libraries Connected

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 9am Wednesday 9th July

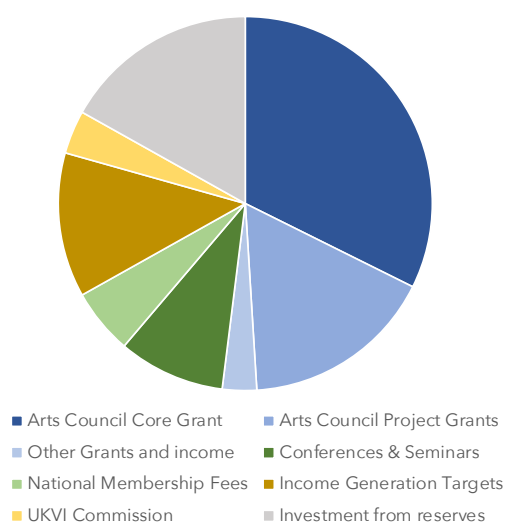
1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries Connected is a national charity and the membership organisation of public libraries across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies.

Libraries Connected has a mixed funding model, made up of grants and earned income from membership fees, consultancy, sponsorship, ticketed events and commercial projects. Since our establishment as Libraries Connected in 2018, we have grown our income from £0.5m p.a. to £2.8m in 2022/23.

We are in year 3 of a 4 year Investment Principle Support Organisation grant which provides core funding for the organisation from Arts Council England (ACE). In addition to this we have a number of programmes and projects funded by ACE, including one which is to support libraries develop regional networks to a point where they are able to bid for and secure local and regional funding to provide services aligned to the libraries.

We hold and manage a national commercial contract into 8 libraries delivering an outsourced element of the UK Visa and Immigration Service, bringing around £2.5m per year to the libraries.



Our grant funding is then very dependent on Arts Council England which has an impact on sustainability, but also focusses on a single nation within our membership area.

To underpin our strategic plan 2022-27, our Trustees have identified the need and opportunity for the organisation as a whole to diversify our funding base to:

- increase our resilience and independence by securing funding from a wide range of sources including commercial activities, membership offer, events and activities and trust and grant funded project income
- increase our total income
- support a wider range of projects and activities as a way to meet the needs of the sector, and to test and develop new activities
- fund activity in Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies as well as England
- secure funding for our own programmes and to support delivery of library work

To support us in this we have grown the commercial team with a focus on securing national contracts and partnerships, and we have a regional team looking at supporting groups of libraries identify and secure contracts with the new and emerging combined authorities and devolved structures.

This ITT is to secure expertise in identifying and tendering for contracts at that combined authority level to support our regional team.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 About Us – Libraries Connected

Libraries Connected is a charity partly funded by Arts Council England as the Sector Support Organisation for libraries. We are also proud to remain a membership organisation, made up of every library service in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies.

Our vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable, and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK. We work to promote the value of libraries; broker national partnerships share best practice and drive innovation in the sector.

We:

- Represent the public library sector to communicate the value of libraries
- Connect partners to local libraries by brokering national relationships with a wide range of organisations and individuals
- Improve library services by developing and sharing best practice, providing training for library staff, and facilitating a network of library leaders in the UK
- Drive innovation and new thinking on the role of libraries in a modern society.

2.2 The library sector

Our membership is the 178 public library services in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies.



We foster regional/national networks for these libraries, and also connect them nationally via our Basecamp communities and our thematic Universal Library Offer networks.

Public library services are funded from local government, and while a statutory service, they are facing significant challenges as local government funding is reduced.

Our expectation is that the contractor would develop expertise within the library sector and that this expertise would be very highly sought after across the library sector. It is likely there is opportunity for the contractor – if they desire – to seek direct commissions from library services across the country.

2.3 Our funders and partners

Partnerships are fundamental to our work. We have long-standing relationships with a family of close partners including:

- Arts Council England
- The Association of Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)
- BBC
- Booksellers Association
- Booktrust
- The British Library
- Carnegie UK Trust
- CILIP
- Good Things Foundation
- The Local Government Association
- National Literacy Trust
- The Publishers Association
- The Reading Agency
- The Skills Network
- TLS (Teleperformance)
- Share the Vision
- Sopra Steria

3. DELIVERABLES

We are seeking an expert contractor – individual or agency – to support our Team and Board to:

- Support our regional development team in developing systems to support a pipeline of bids to procurement from Combined Authorities and other devolved bodies
- Support our team to put in place processes to monitor and prioritise tender opportunities with these bodies
- Support our team to submit successful bids

The team will have an additional focus on supporting and enabling the library services in the areas covered by these contracts to be able to contribute and to commit to the contract – it is worth noting that as an organisation our focus is supporting and enabling library services to deliver, rather than delivering ourselves.

We would see the successful bidder to this contract as both supporting and advising the regional development team as well as providing additional resources to carry out some bid writing.

The work should:

- Build on the strengths of our previous successful and unsuccessful bids
- Integrate with our income generation strategy (earned and commercial income)
- Integrate with our regional development programme which focuses on sub-national funders and commissioners
- Set out how to build skills and capacity within the team
- Identify key partners who could support regional /sub-regional bids that our commercial team can build relationships with nationally.

3.1 Ways of working

Our staff team will be integral to the project and the contractor will work closely with them to develop the plan and other elements of the project – primarily the Regional Development team but also with the input of the Commercial team, and the specialist expertise we have access to in respect to e.g. digital inclusion, health literacy etc.

We are a membership organisation and we work ‘with’ our members and the stakeholders to the broader sector.

As a charity we have a clear set of values and we expect contractors to work to these values.

4. OUTCOMES

- Effective system in place to monitor and prioritise bids
- Regional Development Team supported to submit bids themselves
- Additional capacity provided to enable Libraries Connected to submit bids over and above the immediate capacity of the Regional Development Team

We have targets in the budget of £40k for this work – this would be for the contribution to Libraries Connected income. Given the library services themselves will be the point of delivery and where most of the contract value will sit, this is likely to be equivalent to around £200-400k of bids secured over the year.

5. CONTRACT GOVERNANCE

The contract will be directly managed by the Commercial Director of Libraries Connected, who also manages the Regional Development Team.

6. WORKPLAN AND MILESTONES

We envisage the project will follow this workplan, but proposals can set out an alternative timetable to meet the deliverables.

Overall programme plan

Set out a clear timetable for procurement and delivery of the project, and any deadlines or milestones. Example given below with indicative times following appointment.

Activity	Time Period
Planning, including an initiation meeting with the Regional Development Team	3 months from contract award
Advise on and support development of processes for identifying / prioritising bids	3 months from contract award
Review of previous bid submissions and consideration of required baseline collateral for future bids	3 months from contract award
Bidwriting and supporting bidwriting in the team	Ongoing

7. BUDGET

A maximum of £20,000 is available for this project inclusive of VAT and all Contractors' expenses, and this includes a provision for some element of bidwriting support.

The work is expected to be carried out virtually in the main, but we would anticipate opportunities to work on site with libraries and the regional development team on occasion where that supports a successful outcome.

Travel, accommodation, sustenance, and any other reasonable costs incurred by the tenderers as part of project should be costed in the overall budget.

8. PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

8.1 Procurement timetable

Invitation to Tender	9 th June
Deadline for clarifications	27 th June



Clarifications published (clarifications may be published throughout)	30 th June
Closing date	9 th July
Potential virtual meetings with shortlisted bidders	16/17 July
Appointment of successful contractor	End July

8.2 Proposal content

Proposals should be no more than 2500 words and should include

- Understanding of the brief
- An outline methodology for achieving the brief
- A statement of your skills and experience in context of this brief including names and experience of each person assigned to the project. Examples and links to relevant reports you have written or contributed to should be included
- An outline work plan and timetable for this work
- A clear breakdown of costs which includes all rates, fees, and expenses you are anticipating for the project. If you are VAT registered this must be included in your costings
- A statement showing understanding of and commitment to the values of Libraries Connected <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/about-us>
- Two contactable referees who could provide a relevant reference of your suitability to work on this project

8.3 Proposal submission

Please email proposals to commercial@librariesconnected.org.uk by 9am on Wednesday 9th July

8.4 Evaluation of proposals

We will evaluate proposals using these criteria:

CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
Extent to which proposal demonstrates an understanding of the brief	25
Knowledge and experience relevant to the project, including experience of running consultation processes and strategic planning	25
Quality of methodology	25

Proposed team composition and management	15
Cost (Value for money)	10

8 THE TERMS OF BUSINESS RELATING TO THE AWARD OF ANY CONTRACT

We usually pay an instalment at the start, and then staged payments at project milestones and a final payment when the work is fully signed off. However, this is negotiable depending on the size, nature and length of the project.

We are conscious that there are a number of smaller organisations that work in this space and we make sure we set payment terms and actually pay invoices promptly to support the sustainability of smaller organisations and the specialist experience they can offer the sector.

9 COMPLIANCE

Libraries Connected reserves the right to disqualify any provider's response to this ITT if it does not fully comply with the requirements contained therein. This is particularly relevant in relation to the stated closing date and time of applications.

Libraries Connected is not responsible for and will not pay for any expenses or losses you incur during, but not limited to, the application preparation, visits, negotiations, or interviews in relation to this procurement process. It is your responsibility to ensure that any consortium member, sub-contractor, and adviser abide by the conditions set out by Libraries Connected.

In submitting a response to this ITT, it will be implied that you accept all the provisions of this ITT including these conditions.

If Libraries Connected needs to change any information contained within this ITT before the closing date, you will be written to advise you of these changes, which includes the extension of any submission deadlines. Libraries Connected reserves the right to cancel or suspend this ITT process at any time but will notify you in writing as soon as possible if this occurs.

It is expected that the contractor will work within the values and behaviours of Libraries Connected and this will be part of the contract of engagement.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

For an informal discussion about the work, please contact:

Iain Moore Iain.Moore@librariesconnected.org.uk