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Award

Digital Open Access Publishing Platform and Associated Publishing Services

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

F15: Voluntary ex ante transparency notice

Notice identifier: 2024/S 000-001240

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-042d0b

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Section I: Contracting authority/entity

I.1) Name and addresses

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Heslington

YORK

YO105DD

Contact

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Email

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Telephone

+44 1904328207

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKE21 - York

Companies House

RC000679

Internet address(es)

Main address

www.york.ac.uk

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

Education

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Digital Open Access Publishing Platform and Associated Publishing Services

Reference number

UY PROC 1037

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 48312000 - Electronic publishing software package

II.1.3) Type of contract

Supplies

II.1.4) Short description

The White Rose University Press (WRUP) is a non-profit, open access digital publisher of peer-reviewed academic journals and books, publishing across a wide range of academic disciplines. WRUP wishes to enter into a five-year contract with a single established service provider for the provision of technical and publishing services to support the operation of the press. This involves system provision (platform and infrastructure) as well as the full range of publishing services set out in further detail below.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.1.7) Total value of the procurement (excluding VAT)

Lowest offer: £490,000 / Highest offer: £790,000 taken into consideration

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79970000 - Publishing services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKE - Yorkshire and the Humber

Main site or place of performance

White Rose Libraries (University of York, University of Leeds, University of Sheffield)

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

We are looking to contract with a full-service provider for five years for the provision of an established publishing platform, and all necessary infrastructure for the publishing of open access digital journals, books, research data and conference proceedings under the institution's own university press branding. The service provider must also be able to provide a full suite of services to support editorial management, peer-review, anti-plagiarism checking, copyediting, typesetting, design and layout, long-term preservation, and indexing, alongside content promotion, an online portal for making publications available for free download, and capacity to support print-on-demand hardcopy distribution of books through a range of channels.

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Negotiated without a prior call for competition

- The works, supplies or services can be provided only by a particular economic operator for the following reason:
 - absence of competition for technical reasons

Explanation:

The White Rose University Press (WRUP) is a non-profit, open access digital publisher of peer-reviewed academic journals and books, publishing across a wide range of academic disciplines. It is run jointly by the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York.

There is limited in-house resource to manage the press - one FTE and a part-time resource at York - however this is manageable as we partner with Ubiquity Press, a full-service provider who provides the full package of services, i.e. the platform, infrastructure and associated publishing services, for us to operate our institution-branded press portal. Partnering with a full-service provider has allowed the small in-house team to focus on advocacy and relationship management.

Our current contract ends in July 2024. There are no plans to increase the in-house staffing levels to run the press, yet the team are hoping to scale up the number of publications on the platform by 2027. It is therefore critical that any potential partner offers the following as a minimum:

1. Established platform and infrastructure for books AND journals that is compliant with GDPR/accessibility standards. To include an online submission and editorial management system for journal and book content, plus customisable press website with WRUP branding and front end for the reading and downloading of journal/book content. We do not have the resource to manage these elements separately or via separate suppliers
2. Ongoing development and support for infrastructure and front end websites
3. End-to-end monograph publishing services (see description above at II.2.4)
4. Financial support (invoicing and payment handling)
5. A mature service offering that is in use with multiple other similar clients - unfortunately

we do not have the resource at this time to help providers who are still developing their offering

The team have been researching alternative service providers as part of the contract review process. While individual elements of the service are available from various suppliers, the team doesn't have the capacity to implement and manage separate supply contracts and this would not be a step forward. We believe there is only one supplier currently in the market capable of providing all of the required elements of the contract and it is for this reason that the University wishes to place a five-year contract with Ubiquity Press without a call for competition.

Value:

Note the values quoted above are for the full five-year period, include VAT and cover the fixed platform fees, the fees for our five existing journals, and also an estimation of our book project costs over the whole duration of the contract. The latter is difficult to predict as a number of book projects were delayed by the pandemic but are now expected to go ahead within the next three years. Therefore the highest figure provided allows for an increase in throughput which we hope to achieve during the contract period. In reality, the five-year contract could be closer to the lower value if this is not realised. Also note that a proportion of the book/journal costs are invoiced directly to external funders, but they have been included in the value as they are all part of the total value of the business that the contract brings to the contracted supplier.

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

Section V. Award of contract/concession

Contract No

UY PROC 1037

Title

Digital Open Access Publishing Platform and Associated Services

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract/concession

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

15 January 2024

V.2.2) Information about tenders

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor/concessionaire

Ubiquity Press Ltd

London

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UKI - London

Companies House

06677886

The contractor/concessionaire is an SME

Yes

V.2.4) Information on value of contract/lot/concession (excluding VAT)

Lowest offer: £490,000 / Highest offer: £790,000 taken into consideration

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

University of York (Legal Services Team)

York

Country

United Kingdom