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Award

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Commissioning and Post-Warranty Maintenance of Automated Block Trimmer and Laser Slice Printers

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

F15: Voluntary ex ante transparency notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-004976

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-04dec7

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Section I: Contracting authority/entity

I.1) Name and addresses

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Hills Rd

Cambridge

CB2 0QQ

Contact

Eos Wong

Email

eos.wong1@nhs.net

Telephone

+44 7719412765

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKH12 - Cambridgeshire CC

Internet address(es)

Main address

<http://www.cuh.nhs.uk>

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

Health

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Commissioning and Post-Warranty Maintenance of Automated Block Trimmer and Laser Slice Printers

Reference number

ADD/PU/EW/24/40

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 38000000 - Laboratory, optical and precision equipments (excl. glasses)

II.1.3) Type of contract

Supplies

II.1.4) Short description

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Commissioning and Post-Warranty Maintenance of Automated Block Trimmer and Laser Slice Printers

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

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

Value excluding VAT: £640,000

II.2) Description

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKH12 - Cambridgeshire CC

Main site or place of performance

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Cambridge

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

The Histopathology team at CUH is part of the Pathology Directorate and forms part of Division B comprising a number of other services including Genomics and Cancer Services. The department currently processes approximately 80,000 cases per year generating approximately 240,000 wax blocks and 500,000 slides.

CUH is currently in the process of tendering for the provision of a solution to complement the automation of existing workflow from microtomy to block check of blocks and stained slides. The solution must include on-demand printing of slides, and a fully automated walk-away system for block trimming of paraffin embedded blocks that can be sectioned either manually or automated using the AS-410M auto sectioner. The laboratory currently makes use of batch slide printing for manual microtomy, and manually trims paraffin embedded blocks to be sectioned through automated sectioning and slide mounting. The solution must allow the laboratory to implement a continuous workflow that eliminates batching requirements, and checking of block against slide at the quality check step. The slide printing component of the solution must be able to interface to EPIC Beaker. The devices must fulfill the following essential requirements:

- Solution must be compatible with existing equipment, consumables and workflow for maintaining operational efficiency
- Solution must be within current budget
- Solution must be able to trim in blocks full face as a walk-away system
- Solution and associated consumables must be compatible to automated sectioner AS-410 and manual microtomy
- Evidence of implementation and validation of equipment must be provided
- Solution must be able to automatically change blades as required
- Solution must be able to automatically orientate block surface without human intervention
- Solution must allow continuous loading of blocks
- Solution must have integrated imaging system to capture image of blocks trimmed for reference purposes and quality check
- Solution must have built in wax waste collection
- Solution must have a notification system for status update

- Solution must be able to trim paraffin blocks at a minimum rate of 1 to 2 minutes per block
- Solution must have a capacity of being able to hold up to 192 blocks for continuous trimming
- Solution must have functionality to be able to trim various tissue types. Please confirm tissue types that have been validated to be trimmed on equipment.
- Slide printing must use non-contact UV laser marking technology
- Slide printing component must be able to print at a rate of up to 5 seconds per slide
- Slides used on the slide printers must be agnostic and validated to downstream histopathology equipment including but not limited to VIP6 Tissue processors, Automated microtomy AS-140s, immunohistochemistry platform including BOND-III, BOND PRIME, Ventana platforms, any microtomes and archiving systems.
- Slide printing solution must have minimum of 1 to 2 slide hoppers, which can be removable and allow swapping between slide hoppers
- There must be a i interface between the Supplier's slide printing and EPIC Beaker
- Slide printing must have standalone functionality in case of LIMS connection failure to equipment

The department is planning to relocate to its new base in 1000 Discovery Drive over a 3 week period from 25th July 2025. Tenderers should be aware that they may be required to install their solution in the current premises before relocating to the 1000 Discovery Drive site.

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Award of a contract without prior publication of a call for competition in the cases listed below

- The procurement falls outside the scope of application of the regulations

Explanation:

The Trust believes that only the AT-192M FFPE Tissue Block Automatic Facing Device, SurePrint S200 and SurePrint S10 slide printers from Axlab Ltd contains and complies with all of the essential requirements and functionalities described at II.2.4 above. Axlab is the sole provider of both type of equipment to provide a solution compatible to existing workflows. This includes an automated and true walkaway of block trimming and slide printing using non-contact UV laser printing technology, while complementing existing workflow and LIMS integration, and agnostic to existing consumables such as slides used. There are no known automated and walk-away block trimming solution that compares to the AT-192. The S10 and S200 slide printing solutions also provides an enhanced printing resolution, greater compatibility with LIMS reducing needs for software modifications. There are lower maintenance requirements, thus reduced downtime and training requirements for a high volume and high throughput laboratory.

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

Section V. Award of contract/concession

Contract No

ADD/PU/EW/24/40

Title

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Commissioning and Post-Warranty Maintenance of Automated Block Trimmer and Laser Slice Printers

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract/concession

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

13 February 2025

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

Axlab Ltd

112C High Street, Hadleigh

Ipswich

IP7 5EL

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UKH14 - Suffolk

The contractor/concessionaire is an SME

No

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

Total value of the contract/lot/concession: £640,000

V.2.5) Information about subcontracting

The contract/lot/concession is likely to be subcontracted

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Hills Road

Cambridge

CB2 0QQ

Country

United Kingdom