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Planning

PROCAT Digital Service Rebuild

The National Archives

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - view information about notice types

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-022042

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-051556

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Scope

Description

PROCAT is a bespoke service which was commissioned by The National Archives (TNA) in 1999\2000. It was built to catalogue public records, to provide an end-to-end service for both staff involved in cataloguing records, and for the public searching TNA's online catalogue via our public website. A service (SAR) controlling access based on PRA principles, was added soon afterwards.

Although the public catalogue access is now supplied by the Discovery service, PROCAT and SAR are still in use every day for preparing descriptions of newly accessioned paper records and revising descriptions and access to existing TNA paper records. ("Paper" here stands for any records not born-digital).

The service is built with components (web pages, search engine, SQL database and batch processes) of that era which have lasted well. However, many elements are now obsolete and are increasingly incompatible with any modern servers used to provide the service. There

are significant risks due to this technology:

That the service may fail catastrophically (=not recoverable) at any time.

Continued operations pose a cyber security risk due to use of insecure browser technology.

TNA has already commissioned a discovery process to detail the problem areas and outline a route to a transitional architecture which will partly replace those obsolete and cyber risk components. The aim is to provide a stable service prior to complete replacement. This avoids both the risks inherent in a "big bang" complete replacement project and maintains the service while other elements of the successor architecture are defined.

TNA now wishes to identify a delivery partner to deliver the transitional architecture. In summary these are:

Improve data ingest for large scale data loads ("accessioning") and large-scale access control ("change Open\Closed status")

Replace Active X based activation of an XML editing tool for markup

Replace an obsolete search engine used for detailed search of the existing catalogue by inhouse ("TNA staff") users

Total value (estimated)

- £500,000 excluding VAT

- £600,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2027

- 2 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 72000000 - IT services: consulting, software development, Internet and support

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Engagement

Engagement deadline

9 June 2025

Engagement process description

The purpose of this notice is to gauge the level of potential interest in this opportunity from the marketplace, and to have the opportunity to engage with interested parties to a) provide more insight into the requirement, b) identify suppliers that may be able to supply the services required, and c) develop the authority's requirements and approach to the procurement.

Any interested parties who submit an expression of interest for the opportunity will be invited to one or more supplier events at date(s) to be determined.

To submit your expression of interest, simply email procurement@nationalarchives by 5pm

on 09 June 2025 with your contact details.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Contracting authority

The National Archives

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PTBZ-4379-JQQX

Kew

Richmond

TW9 4DU

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Website: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Region: UKI75 - Hounslow and Richmond upon Thames

Organisation type: Public authority - central government