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Tender

E-Books, E-Book Collections and E-Textbooks - APUC

APUC Limited

F02: Contract notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-083039

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-050477

Published 15 December 2025, 4:16pm

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

APUC Limited

Unit 27, Stirling Business Centre, Wellgreen

Stirling

FK8 2DZ

Contact

Lorona Watts

Email

lwatts@apuc-scot.ac.uk

Telephone

+44 1314428950

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

UKM - Scotland

Internet address(es)

Main address

<http://www.apuc-scot.ac.uk>

Buyer's address

https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/search/Search_AuthProfile.aspx?ID=AA10402

I.2) Information about joint procurement

The contract is awarded by a central purchasing body

I.3) Communication

The procurement documents are available for unrestricted and full direct access, free of charge, at

<https://www.publictendersscotland.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk>

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted electronically via

<https://www.publictendersscotland.publiccontractsscotland.gov.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

E-Books, E-Book Collections and E-Textbooks - APUC

Reference number

LIB1024 AP

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 22113000 - Library books

II.1.3) Type of contract

Supplies

II.1.4) Short description

The Authority is acting on behalf of the HE and FE institutions in Scotland and overseas campuses, Members of the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL) which includes amongst its members, the National Library of Scotland, the National Museum of Scotland, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Scotland Excel and its members

Please refer to Appendix E - List of Institutions for more detail.

The Authority is seeking Contractors to supply a wide range of academic content in digital format and associated content and services from Aggregators and Publishers.

The scope will include:

E-Books

E-Book Collections (Publishers packages)

E-Textbooks

Associated digital content

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £34,500,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: Yes

Tenders may be submitted for maximum number of lots
4

Maximum number of lots that may be awarded to one tenderer: 4

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Title by Title purchase and Collections

Lot No

1

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 22113000 - Library books

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKM - Scotland

Main site or place of performance

Scotland

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This exercise is being undertaken on behalf of the HE/FE Institutions in Scotland and the members of Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL), including the National Library of Scotland, National Museum of Scotland, the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh and Scotland Excel and its members.

The Authority intends to appoint a maximum of 8 Contractors to supply

Title-by-title purchasing of e-books via an aggregator platform for delivery via the

aggregator's own platform. Packages may be offered, such as DDA and EBA Programmes, and audiobooks. Contractors will offer perpetual access licences but may also offer alternatives (e.g. 365-day licences, including POA models) where perpetual licensing is not available.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Technical / Weighting: 60

Price - Weighting: 40

II.2.6) Estimated value

Value excluding VAT: £8,000,000

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

Duration in months

24

This contract is subject to renewal

Yes

Description of renewals

The Framework Agreement will commence on the 01.04.2026 for an initial period of 2 years and will expire on the 31.03.2028 The Authority reserves the right to extend the Framework Agreement for a further 2 x 12 month periods subject to satisfactory performance and continued requirements of the Authority's members and the members of SCURL

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

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

II.2.14) Additional information

Economic operators may be excluded from this competition if they are in any of the situations referred to in regulation 58 of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Title by Title and Collections (Access on a Third Party Platform)

Lot No

2

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 22113000 - Library books

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKM - Scotland

Main site or place of performance

Scotland

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This exercise is being undertaken on behalf of the HE/FE Institutions in Scotland and the members of Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL), including the National Library of Scotland, National Museum of Scotland, the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh and Scotland Excel and its members.

The Authority intends to appoint a maximum of 8 Contractors to supply Title by Title and Collections, with access provided on a 3rd Party Platform)

The lot will enable the purchase of content via an aggregator with the content provided on a third-party's platform.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Technical / Weighting: 60

Price - Weighting: 40

II.2.6) Estimated value

Value excluding VAT: £8,000,000

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

Duration in months

24

This contract is subject to renewal

Yes

Description of renewals

The Framework Agreement will commence on the 01.04.2026 for an initial period of 2 years and will expire on the 31.03.2028 The Authority reserves the right to extend the Framework Agreement for a further 2 x 12 month periods subject to satisfactory performance and continued requirements of the Authority's members and the members of SCURL

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

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

II.2.14) Additional information

Economic operators may be excluded from this competition if they are in any of the situations referred to in regulation 58 of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Aggregated subscriptions packages

Lot No

3

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 22113000 - Library books

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKM - Scotland

Main site or place of performance

Scotland

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This exercise is being undertaken on behalf of the HE/FE Institutions in Scotland and the members of Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL), including the National Library of Scotland, National Museum of Scotland, the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh and Scotland Excel and its members.

The Authority intends to appoint a maximum of 6 Contractors to provide Subscription e-book packages via an aggregator or a third-party platform. Packages may include wider digital content in addition to e-books. Package content is likely to be pre-defined in nature.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Technical / Weighting: 50

Price - Weighting: 50

II.2.6) Estimated value

Value excluding VAT: £1,500,000

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

Duration in months

24

This contract is subject to renewal

Yes

Description of renewals

The Framework Agreement will commence on the 01.04.2026 for an initial period of 2 years and will expire on the 31.03.2028 The Authority reserves the right to extend the Framework Agreement for a further 2 x 12 month periods subject to satisfactory performance and continued requirements of the Authority's members and the members of SCURL

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

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

II.2.14) Additional information

Economic operators may be excluded from this competition if they are in any of the situations referred to in regulation 58 of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

E-Textbooks

Lot No

4

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 22113000 - Library books
- 22112000 - Textbooks

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom
- UKM - Scotland

Main site or place of performance

Scotland

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This exercise is being undertaken on behalf of the HE/FE Institutions in Scotland and the members of Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL), including the National Library of Scotland, National Museum of Scotland, the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh and Scotland Excel and its members.

The Authority intends to appoint a maximum of 5 Contractors to supply E- Textbook content via an aggregator and hosted on the aggregators or publisher's platform

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Technical / Weighting: 50

Price - Weighting: 50

II.2.6) Estimated value

Value excluding VAT: £8,000,000

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

Duration in months

24

This contract is subject to renewal

Yes

Description of renewals

The Framework Agreement will commence on the 01.04.2026 for an initial period of 2 years and will expire on the 31.03.2028 The Authority reserves the right to extend the

Framework Agreement for a further 2 x 12 month periods subject to satisfactory performance and continued requirements of the Authority's members and the members of SCURL

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

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

II.2.14) Additional information

Economic operators may be excluded from this competition if they are in any of the situations referred to in regulation 58 of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

E-Books and E-Textbooks (Title by Title & Collections)

Lot No

5

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 22113000 - Library books

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKM - Scotland
- UK - United Kingdom

Main site or place of performance

Scotland

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

1. This exercise is being undertaken on behalf of the HE/FE Institutions in Scotland and the members of Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL), including the National Library of Scotland, National Museum of Scotland, the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh and Scotland Excel and its members.

The Authority intends to appoint a maximum of 20 Contractors to supply E-Books and E-Textbooks (Title by Title & Collections) negotiated directly with the publisher and hosted on the publisher's or an aggregator's platform.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Technical / Weighting: 50

Price - Weighting: 50

II.2.6) Estimated value

Value excluding VAT: £9,000,000

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

Duration in months

24

This contract is subject to renewal

Yes

Description of renewals

The Framework Agreement will commence on the 01.04.2026 for an initial period of 2 years and will expire on the 31.03.2028 The Authority reserves the right to extend the Framework Agreement for a further 2 x 12 month periods subject to satisfactory performance and continued requirements of the Authority's members and the members of SCURL

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

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

II.2.14) Additional information

Economic operators may be excluded from this competition if they are in any of the situations referred to in regulation 58 of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

Section III. Legal, economic, financial and technical information

III.1) Conditions for participation

III.1.2) Economic and financial standing

Minimum level(s) of standards possibly required

With reference to Q4B.5 of the SPD in the qualification questionnaire, bidders must confirm they can provide the following supporting evidence prior to award:

Employer's (Compulsory) Liability Insurance* = GBP 5 Million

Product and Public Liability Insurance = GBP 5 Million

Cyber Security Insurance or equivalent

With reference to Q4B.6 of the SPD in the qualification questionnaire, bidders must confirm they can provide the following supporting evidence prior to award:

To demonstrate and evidence suitable economic standing, successful Contractors will be required to provide 2 years audited accounts, or equivalent if awarded the Framework Agreement.

III.1.3) Technical and professional ability

Minimum level(s) of standards possibly required

Tenderers must confirm they have (or have access to) the relevant supply chain management and tracking systems to ensure a resilient and

sustainable supply chain. This includes confirmation that they have the systems in place to pay subcontractors through the supply chain

promptly (i.e. no later than 30 days after the invoice (or similar claim) relating to the payment is presented) and effectively, and provide

evidence when requested of:

a) their standard payment terms

b) 95% of all supply chain invoices being paid on time (in accordance with the terms of contract) in the last financial year

If the bidder is unable to confirm (b) they must provide an improvement plan, signed by their Director, which improves the payment

performance

III.2) Conditions related to the contract

III.2.2) Contract performance conditions

Submission of Management Information

Following commencement of the Framework Agreement, the Contractor will provide a performance report to The Authority on a quarterly basis to include spend by institution under the Framework Agreement for the reporting period.

Contractors must provide the information on a quarterly basis, within 10 working days following the start of each quarter. Data must be uploaded to the website: <http://ucsp.ac.uk/> using the template provided (template shall be provided during the lead-in period). The supplied template is the only format permissible and should contain

Contractor name, tender reference, total net spend by institution each month. If there has been no spend for the quarter, then this will still require you to log in and record a nil spend return.

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Open procedure

IV.1.3) Information about a framework agreement or a dynamic purchasing system

The procurement involves the establishment of a framework agreement

Framework agreement with several operators

Envisaged maximum number of participants to the framework agreement: 30

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

IV.2) Administrative information

IV.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure

Notice number: [2025/S 000-015737](#)

IV.2.2) Time limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate

Date

4 February 2026

Local time

4:00pm

IV.2.4) Languages in which tenders or requests to participate may be submitted

English

IV.2.6) Minimum time frame during which the tenderer must maintain the tender

Duration in months: 48 (from the date stated for receipt of tender)

IV.2.7) Conditions for opening of tenders

Date

4 February 2026

Local time

4:00pm

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.1) Information about recurrence

This is a recurrent procurement: Yes

Estimated timing for further notices to be published: April 2029

VI.2) Information about electronic workflows

Electronic ordering will be used

Electronic invoicing will be accepted

Electronic payment will be used

VI.3) Additional information

Form of Tender

Tenderers must sign Form of Tender - Appendix A prior to award to confirm that their Tender Response is a complete, true and accurate

submission.

Freedom of Information

Appendix B - Freedom of Information(if applicable) in the

This information should only be submitted if applicable at point of award. It is for information only and will not

be scored.

Sustain Supply Chain Code of Conduct

The Authority has developed a Sustain Supply Chain Code of Conduct- Appendix D which sets out its expected standards for its supply

chain in social, ethical and environmental compliance.

List Of Institutions

List of Institutions eligible to use any resulting framework agreement

Prompt Payment

Tenderers must confirm that payment of subcontractors at all stages of the supply chain will be made within a maximum of 30 days and

that this will be managed. It is for information only and will not be scored but is a requirement of this tender and will be included in the

contractual terms.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Please confirm that you will be in a position (prior to award) to complete “Appendix G(i) – GDPR Contractor Assessment Form” and Appendix G(ii) – GDPR Contractor Assessment Form (AI) in the Technical Questionnaire in PCS-Tender.

Tenderers must complete the GDPR Contractor Assessment Forms. It is for information only and will not be scored but is a requirement of this tender and will be included in the contractual terms.

Serious Organised Crime

Please complete “Appendix H – Declaration of Non-Involvement in Serious Organised Crime” in the Technical Questionnaire. Tenderers

must complete the Declaration of Non-Involvement in Serious Organised Crime. It is for information only and will not be scored but it is a

requirement of this tender and will be included in the assessment of tender responses and in contractual terms.

SCM RP Section 1

SCM RP is the Authority's designated tool for contracted suppliers to keep up-to-date essential information on their company, which allows

the Authority to get an insight into their company's general standing, commitment to preventing modern slavery and addressing climate

change, as well as their pledge to fair and decent working practices for their staff. Tenderers must confirm that they will commit to

completing SCM RP Section 1 on award. It is for information only and will not be scored but is a requirement of this tender and will be

included in the contractual terms.

Living Wage Status

Please provide details on your position on the Real Living Wage. This information should be submitted in the Technical envelope in

PSC-T. It is for information only and will not be scored.

Library Management Platforms & Reading Lists

List of Library Management Platforms used please refer to Appendix J in the Technical Questionnaire in PCS-Tender.

Please complete at time of tender submission.

Appendix K - Community Benefits and Value-Added Services

Tenderers are required to complete the table listing Community Benefits and Value-Added Services that will be provided. Please refer to Appendix K in the Technical Questionnaire in PCS-Tender.

Please complete at time of tender submission.

The buyer is using PCS-Tender to conduct this ITT exercise. The Project code is 30712. For more information see:

<http://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/info/InfoCentre.aspx?ID=2343>

The Contracting Authority does not intend to include a sub-contract clause as part of community benefits (as per Section 25 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014) in this contract for the following reason:

It is anticipated that the required service will be provided the appointed Contractor(s)

Community benefits are included in this requirement. For more information see:

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/public-sector-procurement/community-benefits-in-procurement/>

A summary of the expected community benefits has been provided as follows:

Training opportunities

Work experience

Charity contributions

Support for community projects

Engagement with supported businesses

(SC Ref:817125)

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

Stirling Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court Sheriff Court

Sheriff Court House, Viewfield Place

Stirling

FK8 1NH

Telephone

+44 1786462191

Country

United Kingdom

Internet address

<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/courts-and-tribunals/courts-tribunals-and-office-locations/find-us/stirling-sheriff-court-and-justice-of-the-peace-court/>