



ASCEL: Invitation to Tender

Title: Research to support School Library Services

Return to: info@ascel.org.uk

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 12 noon 6 February 2024.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Invitation to Tender (ITT) specifies the requirements for delivering a research project to support School Library Services (SLS/s)

The following details are outlined in this document:

- Background
- Objectives of this project
- The Brief
- Contract Management and Governance
- Workplan and milestones
- Budget
- The terms of business relating to the award of any contract
- Process for submitting proposals
- Further Information
- Compliance

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 ASCEL <https://www.ascel.org.uk/>

ASCEL is the national network for senior leaders in children's, public and schools library services. Created by and for Members, we provide training, peer support, best practice, resources and networking initiatives that enable our Members to give children and young people a dynamic, exciting and innovative library experience and amplify their voices.

Our network of active regional committees support place based partnership working across the country and help to drive our national impact.

ASCEL is a charity that receives funding from Arts Council England as an Investment Principles Support Organisation (IPSO). We are a membership organisation that supports

every public library service for children and young people and school library services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

2.2 School Library Services

Schools Library Services are organisations offering services to schools. They advise schools and provide training on managing and developing their own school libraries and teaching resources in schools, on teaching information literacy skills to enable children to become independent learners and to help schools create a reading culture.

The way each service operates varies considerably from local authority to local authority. SLS UK (supported by ASCEL) consists of a collective of Schools Library Services covering the length and breadth of the UK. <https://sls-uk.org/about/>

3. OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROJECT

This is a research project funded by Arts Council England to execute and complete a research project to enable the sector to gain a better understanding of the number, reach and location of School Library Services (SLS) in England.

It will:

- analyse the number, distribution, provision, service level, reach, quality, different business models (with associated advantages/disadvantages), operating environments and funding arrangements and success factors (which may include use, value and impact) to give a clear national picture of school library services (SLS) in England
- provide an understanding of gaps in SLS provision
- provide a picture of the health of School Library Services across the country
- present a strategic evidence and knowledge base for supporting local authorities or services commissioned by local authorities to maintain and develop SLSs'

4. THE BRIEF

The contractor will:

- Create a survey to be shared with English library services/local authorities
- Carry out desk-based research including collecting case studies examples of best practice, successful delivery and different models and funding
- Conduct a stakeholder survey
- Carry out interviews with SLS leaders and their teams
- Produce a report outlining the national picture in relation to SLS including number, reach, delivery and funding models. mapped against the literacy levels/free school meals/indices of deprivation. The report should include consideration of places where there is no defined SLS but similar provision is provided effectively through public library services
- Look at partnerships between public library services and school library services
- Create a 'how to guide' for those wishing to create an SLS including how to make the case for creating one

- Create a list of contacts/resources/support organisations

5. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

- The contract will be directly managed by the Programme Manager at ASCEL
- The work will be supported by a small reference group of ASCEL SLS Members and the Executive

6. WORKPLAN AND MILESTONES

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

Overall programme plan

| Activity | Time Period |
|--|-------------------|
| Milestone | Date |
| Invitation to Tender published | Friday 19 January |
| Closing date | Midday 6 February |
| Appointment of successful contractor | By 28 February |
| Develop the research plan | March -April |
| Convene reference group | March -April |
| Meeting with reference group | April |
| Research and interviews | April- August |
| Report writing | August- September |
| Presentation and sign off of final report (Trustees, Reference group, CEO and Chair) | October |
| Possibility of sharing at ASCEL Conference (to be confirmed) | 15 or 16 November |

7. BUDGET

A maximum of £ 11.5k inclusive of VAT is available for research and report writing and in addition up to 1.5k is earmarked for researcher travel.

ASCEL will provide some support to convene the reference group and working with Arts Council England to share the findings.

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

Payment at key milestones in two instalments subject to satisfactory progress and delivery of the project.

9. PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

9.1 Procurement timetable

- Submission by 6 February 2024
- Award selection process completed by end February 2024

9.2 Proposal submission

Please submit proposals by email to info@ascel.org.uk

Proposals must be submitted by 6 February 2024

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
- Evidence of your commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Two contactable referees who could provide a relevant reference of your suitability to work on this project

9.3 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 |

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

For an informal discussion about the work, please contact: sarah.mears@ascel.org.uk

11. COMPLIANCE

ASCEL 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.

ASCEL 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 ASCEL.

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

If ASCEL 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. ASCEL 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 ASCEL and this will be part of the contract of engagement.