



Q&As for suppliers

Q What do you mean by 'digital continuity'?

A We've defined 'digital continuity' as the ability to find, access and use digital information for as long as it is needed. In practice, that means making sure that digital information is:

- **Complete:** it's all there, and still has the metadata and links needed for the information to make sense.
- **Available:** you can find the information and open it with available technology.
- **Usable:** you can use the information in a way that meets current business needs.

Q What is the Digital Continuity project?

A The Digital Continuity project is managed by The National Archives and funded by central government departments. We're developing a shared service that will help government and the public sector to access its critical digital information for as long as it needs to.

Q What is the Digital Continuity shared service?

A The Digital Continuity shared service will include guidance, standards and a Framework of tools and services to help government and public sector to resolve existing Digital Continuity issues and to ensure their digital information remains complete, usable and available over time. Tools and services will be delivered under a Framework Agreement, procured under EU rules. The Framework will provide a catalogue of pre-assessed tools and solutions, professional information management services, and integration services.

Q Who are your customers? How many of them are there?

A Initially, our customers are the central government departments who funded the project. However the shared service will be relevant to the whole of government, including agencies and the wider public sector. All will be encouraged to assess digital continuity risks and to



take action to mitigate the risks they've identified.

The requirement for central government to take action is addressed in the CESG Information Assurance Maturity Model: http://www.cesg.gov.uk/products_services/iacs/iamm/index.shtml (CESG is the National Technical Authority for Information Assurance at GCHQ).

Q I was previously engaged with the market sounding exercise. Can I still get involved?

A Yes. We are interested in the technologies and services that you may offer in the information management space, especially those that help to identify and mitigate continuity risks and issues. We have a template for you to submit this information to us on our project website: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/digitalcontinuity/suppliers.htm>

Q I was not involved in market soundings with you previously. Will this leave me at a disadvantage?

A No. We used the market sounding exercise to inform the project strategy. Having selected the Framework approach to procure the necessary tools and services we are keen to consult suitable suppliers as we develop our requirements.

Q What do you want from suppliers now?

A Suppliers who have tools or services relating to; information management or efficient data management and storage can register these with us through our website: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/digitalcontinuity/suppliers.htm>

There are two benefits to registering:

- When we develop our requirements, your registration will help us to decide whether it would be beneficial for us to contact you to understand more about current technologies and services.
- If you register, we can alert you when any changes are made to the information on our website – including formal notice of the procurement, which will be via an OJEU Contract Notice.



Q What are the Digital Continuity shared service time frames?

A We're developing guidance now to help departments to assess digital continuity risks, and will deliver further guidance on implementing continuity actions as the project progresses. Our Framework of tools and services should be available by the second quarter of 2010.

Q What is your procurement approach?

A We are working with Buying Solutions (www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk) to deliver a Framework Agreement procured under OJEU rules.

Q What is a government Framework Agreement and how does it work?

A A Framework Agreement is a contractual vehicle that allows purchasers, in this case government and public sector organisations, to order goods and services under pre-specified terms and conditions. As the Framework is procured using an EU-regulation compliant process, purchasers save time and money by using a call-off process rather than undertaking a fully competitive procurement. Once established the Framework will be available online as part of the Buying Solutions' catalogue.

Q What types of products and services are you looking to identify?

A We are seeking to create a comprehensive catalogue of technology tools and services and solutions: all with a focus on improving information management, or addressing issues associated with digital obsolescence. We currently expect the framework to include, but not necessarily limited to, the following types of technology:

- Characterisation Tools
- Characterisation Frameworks
- Text Analytics
- Data Loss Prevention Tools
- Data Recovery Tools



- Format Transformation / Migration
- File filters / Viewers
- Digital Signature Tools
- E-Discovery Tools
- Database Archival Tools
- Database Schema Extraction Tools
- Software Emulation Tools or Environments
- Integrated Archival / Preservation systems
- E-Mail Archival Systems
- Other data management/storage and information management efficiency tools

Q How long will the digital continuity Framework last?

A Currently we expect the initial Framework to be for two to three years, during this time we aim to address additional requirements as input to future Frameworks so that new products may be adopted as technology in this area develops.

Q We have never bid for a government contract before; do you have any information to help us understand the government process?

A You should find everything you need to know about tendering for government Frameworks at the Buying Solutions website: <http://online.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk/bcm/Supplierzone/>

Q We are based outside the UK, would you be interest in our products?

A Yes.

Q When will you award contracts?

A We are aiming for contract award onto the framework second quarter of 2010.

Q Where can I get more information?

A From our website: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/digitalcontinuity
Or email us at digitalcontinuity@nationalarchives.gov.uk