

**Invitation to Tender for IT Services**

**Introduction**

The Science Council is inviting tenders for its IT support service. The purpose of this tender is to invite qualified vendors to submit proposals for the supply, installation and maintenance of its IT infrastructure.

Interested vendors are invited to submit their proposals as per the terms and conditions set forth in this document. The successful bidder will be expected to enter into a formal service level agreement for the provision of the required services and products.

**Constitution and Principal Activity**

The Science Council was established under Royal Charter in October 2003 and was registered as a charity with the Charity Commission in September 2009 (Charity number 1131661).

The Science Council is a membership organisation that brings together over [30 learned societies and professional bodies](https://sciencecouncil.org/about-us/our-members-and-licensed-bodies/) across science and its applications. Our purpose is to strengthen the collective impact of the science community for public benefit,

The Science Council provides a quality assurance system for those working in science and, through our professional registers, we offer interdisciplinary recognition for scientists across the world. We set the standards for professional registration across all scientific disciplines and license our professional body members to award professional registration to practising scientists, science technicians and science teachers. Collectively, our Members comprise over 320,000 individual members. Individuals that meet the standards may use the designation CSci, CSciTeach, RSci or RSciTech after their name.

**Structure and Governance**

The Science Council is governed by a [Board of Trustees](https://sciencecouncil.org/about-us/our-governance/board-and-committees/) answerable to the Full Council of Members. The Science Council’s Charter, Bylaws and Regulations can be found within the governance section of the [website](https://sciencecouncil.org/about-us/our-governance/board-and-committees/).

The Science Council’s current strategy, and Annual Report and Financial Statements up to 2023 are available on the Science Council [website](https://sciencecouncil.org/about-us/our-governance/board-and-committees/).

As of the start of 2025, the Science Council has 15 employees, of which 11 are permanent and 4 of which are fixed term. The Science Council has a serviced office in central London. The team is a mixture of full-time and part-time, home-based and hybrid home/office-working employees. The home-based employees are widely dispersed within England.

**Current service provision**

This section provides insight into our current IT provision, which is sufficient for the charity to function well. We are open to things staying quite similar and also open to receiving advice about change.

The Science Council uses the Microsoft Office 365 package, including Outlook, SharePoint, OneDrive, Visio, Teams, Microsoft Edge as its web browser, and Power Bi for its management accounts. We currently have 16 Business Premium and 6 Business Basics accounts. Our current IT partner provides antivirus protection using Bitdefender and provides remote monitoring and management of data with regular backup and storage.

The Science Council uses other specialist cloud-based platforms such as Salesforce for its CRM and Xero for finance. The Science Council uses Form Assembly and Salesforce to support applicants through the process of becoming registered and to securely store their details. Although the management of these platforms are out of scope for this tender, secure, reliable and prompt connectivity and network maintenance is essential. Our website is also out of scope for this tender. We will be procuring a new website in 2025 and as part of this transition we may switch away from Salesforce to use a database that is integral to the website package. Furthermore, we are investigating the adoption of digital certification for our professional registers. As before, secure, reliable and prompt connectivity is essential.

Science Council staff are issued with laptops that are procured, configured and dispatched by our current IT partner. Most laptops are purchased outright, with some on short-term leases. Laptops undergo remote maintenance checks every six months and are replaced on an ad-hoc basis. Staff use a mix of corporate-owned and personal mobile phones.

Information security is important to the Science Council. We are Cyber Essentials (CE) accredited and multi-factor authentication is set up as standard on all devises and cloud-based platforms. Our IT partner provides staff with regular phishing training.

**Service requirements**

We are seeking a reliable IT partner to ensure the smooth operation of our technology infrastructure, deliver comprehensive support services, including helpdesk support, system maintenance, and technical troubleshooting.

The selected vendor will install and provide ongoing support for the following software and equipment:

* Microsoft Office 365, including Outlook, SharePoint, OneDrive, Teams, Vision and Power Bi. Outlook must have at least 49.5 GB storage per account and enable large files to be sent and received from contacts outside the organisation without compromising performance.
* Microsoft Business Premium and Business Basics accounts to meet current and future needs.
* Laptop and corporate mobile device application configuration and management.
* Multi-factor authentication on all devices (including laptops, tablets and mobile phones) and cloud-based platforms.
* Up to date anti-virus protection for all corporate-owned laptops.
* Procurement, configuration, programming and dispatch of laptops within two weeks of request. Laptop specifications must be adequate to run the configured software quickly and reliably. Approximately two roles require higher specification laptops to run additional role-related graphics software or software related to individual needs.
* Support for initial configuration of related mobile phone apps.

The selected vendor will provide the following ongoing support:

* 24/7 remote network monitoring and maintenance.
* 99.9% network uptime.
* Service desk and remote support between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday UK time.
* During service desk hours, initial response within one hour of ticket submission; 50% of tickets fully resolved within three hours and 95% of tickets resolved within two days.
* Monthly reporting on system performance, response times, resolution times and uptime percentages.
* Maintain our Cyber Essentials accreditation and information security in line with ITIL service management tailored to our needs.
* Routine cloud-based data backup and prompt restoration of data in line with industry standards.
* Ongoing remote phishing training and provision of cyber security awareness information.
* Periodic remote hardware maintenance checks.

The telephone system is managed by our telecoms partner. There are no phones in the office. We use a ‘hosted voice over IP’ system linked to mobile phones. We are interested to hear from potential partners about options to integrate our telephone and IT systems.

The Science Council’s office broadband and printing are managed by third parties and are out of the scope for this tender.

The Science Council is a beacon for good practice in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). We expect our partners to have an exemplary commitment to EDI.

**Submission of Tender**

To facilitate a constructive and collaborative relationship we would expect those tendering to demonstrate that they have experience of working with organisations of a similar size and culture to the Science Council and that they can tailor their service accordingly.

We will be seeking to maximise the value of the relationship with our IT partner. The Science Council has a small staff team, and we will be looking to our IT partner to be proactive, support our growth and add value to what we do. We expect the provider to share their experience, ideas and knowledge to add value and go beyond the basic requirements.

You are invited to respond to this tender, setting out how your organisation would meet our requirements and deliver a high-quality service to support our activities and long-term goals.

Your response should include:

* Completion of the supplier questionnaire included in [Appendix 1](#App1).
* An outline of your organisation’s size, structure and relevant experience and expertise.
* An outline of your organisation’s approach to equity, diversity and inclusion.  Testimonials, feedback or case studies providing positive evidence of your organisation’s work, preferably those in the charitable, professional body, or not-for-profit sector.
* An outline of your organisation’s policy on data protection.
* Information on how you will monitor and optimise system performance (please include relevant information on any industry certifications held).
* Information on how operating systems and core applications will be updated with essential security patches, including update schedules and options for forcing updates out of business hours.
* An outline of the ongoing support arrangements you will provide, including:
  + Service desk open times and out of hours service provision, and whether there are additional costs for out-of-hours service provision.
  + How service tickets are raised and the required information to supply when raising a ticket.
  + The expected incident response and resolution times and the escalation process if the matter cannot be resolved within the same business day and further escalation if not resolved within 48 hours.
  + The provision of a dedicated account manager and the frequency of performance reporting.
  + Anticipated procurement, installation and dispatch times for IT hardware and software.
  + Details of how you will support any staff with identified individual needs relating to accessibility and inclusion.
* The service transition timeline and details of how data transfer will be managed, including One Drive, Teams and emails, any challenges you anticipate in the migration and how you would mitigate them.
* The provision of initial and ongoing training and support resources for new and existing staff.
* An itemised monthly fee, ongoing licensing cost and initial setup costs in UK Pounds Sterling (including all taxes), the proposed payment schedule and terms, length of contract and a breakdown of any other discretionary charges (including all taxes). In calculating the fee, account should be taken of the fact that the Science Council is a registered charity.
* Whether you are subject to any pending litigation and whether you have had any breach of law or legal obligations.
* Whether you are aware of any conflicts of interest that could prejudice independence and objectivity during the tendering process and performance of the contract.

It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that all calculations and prices in the tender are correct at the time of submission.

If you propose to use a subcontractor for the delivery of any part of this work, you should include in your response the details of these individuals or organisations, their location(s), relevant experience and expertise, and the deliverables that each subcontractor will be responsible for.

If you are responding as part of a consortium, please include details of all members of the consortium and, if the consortium is not a legal entity, which individual or organisation will be the prime contractor with responsibility for delivery of the project.

Responses should be submitted by email to the Governance and Corporate Services Manager, [Oliver O’Hanlon](mailto:o.ohanlon@sciencecouncil.org.). The deadline for responses is 12pm (BST) on Thursday 19th June. Submitted responses will be acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt.

**Tender Process and Selection**

**Timetable**[[1]](#footnote-2)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 20th May | Invitation to Tender issued. |
| 4th June | Deadline for clarification questions. |
| 19th June | Deadline for tender responses. |
| 3rd July | Interview preferred suppliers |
| 10th July | Target date for tender outcome to be released and contract to commence. |
|  |  |

**Selection**

Pre-tender negotiations are not permitted but clarification questions can be submitted to [Oliver O’Hanlon](mailto:o.ohanlon@sciencecouncil.org.) with a deadline of 5pm (BST) on Wednesday 4th June. A response will be provided to any clarification question within 2 working days of receipt. Any clarification questions, and the responses, will be shared anonymously with all parties who have been invited to tender. All proposals will be treated as confidential and used solely for the purpose of evaluating bids.

Except for submitting clarification questions as above, you should not discuss this project with any officer, member, employee or volunteer of the Science Council after this Invitation to Tender is issued and before the submission deadline, including directly or indirectly canvassing, offering inducements or seeking additional or privileged information. Any such activity may lead to your proposal being rejected. Offering an inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining this contract will disqualify your tender from being considered.

The Science Council does not bind itself to accept the lowest tender, or any tender received. In awarding the contract, the Science Council will consider the balance between the quality of the tender and value for money, taking account of the requirements listed in this document.

Following the submission deadline, tender proposals will be reviewed by the Science Council and up to three preferred suppliers may be invited to interview on **Thursday 3rd July**. Interviews will be held online. An outcome will be provided within 5 working days after 3rd July, which will be either acceptance of the proposal, rejection of the proposal, a request for additional information, or notification of an extension to the decision-making timeline. The preferred supplier will be invited to enter into a contract with the Science Council.

**Confidentiality statement and Disclaimer**

The information contained in this Invitation to Tender and all other information made available at any time to parties by and on behalf of the Science Council is supplied on the basis that the parties will keep such information confidential at all times and that such information will be used only for the purposes of participating in the tendering process.

No information contained in this document, or any other written, oral or other information made available to parties shall form the basis of any warranty, representation or term of any contract by the Science Council with any third party.

The Science Council reserves the right not to follow this Invitation to Tender in any way and/or to withdraw from or amend the procurement process.

The Science Council reserves the right, without prior notice and in its absolute discretion, to change or terminate the tendering procedure for the project, including requesting additional information, at any time before signing the contract with the successful bidder.

**Appendix 1**

**Supplier Questionnaire**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Section 1 | Tenderer information | |
| Question number | Question | Response |
| 1.1 | Full name of the individual/organisation submitting the information |  |
| 1.2 | Registered office address |  |
| 1.3 | Registered website address |  |
| 1.4 | Company registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.5 | Charity registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.6 | Registered VAT number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.7 | Name of persons of significant control |  |
| 1.8 | Types of insurance held |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Section 2 | **Contact details and declaration**  I declare that to the best of my knowledge the answers submitted in this document and the accompanying tender document(s) are correct and accurate. I understand that the information provided will be used in the selection process to undertake due diligence checks and assess my organisation’s suitability to work with the Science Council.  I understand that this submission may be rejected in its entirety if false/misleading information or content is provided in any section. | |
| Question number | Question | Response |
| 2.1 | Contact name |  |
| 2.2 | Name of organisation |  |
| 2.3 | Role in organisation |  |
| 2.4 | Phone number |  |
| 2.5 | Email address |  |
| 2.6 | Postal address |  |
| 2.7 | Signature (electronic is acceptable) |  |
| 2.8 | Date |  |

1. Please note these dates are subject to change. The Science Council reserves the right to amend the procurement timeline anmay choose not to accept any proposal received or award any contract. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)