

# Facilitating The Development of a New National Public Library Strategy for Ireland: Request for Tender

**Title:** Development of a New National Public Library Strategy for Ireland

**Return to:** [librariesdevelopment@lgma.ie](mailto:librariesdevelopment@lgma.ie)

**Deadline for receipt of tender proposals:** 9am GMT 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2022

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Request for Tender (RFT) specifies the requirements for facilitating the development of a new national public library strategy for Ireland.

The following details are outlined in this document:

- Background Information
- Objectives of this project
- The Brief
- Deliverables
- Contract Management
- 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 The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the County and City Management Association (CCMA)

The previous public library strategy was published jointly by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), and the County and City Management Association (CCMA). The same approach will be taken with the new strategy.

The LGMA is a state agency established in 2012 and is an agency of local authorities and operates in the local government sector, reporting on performance as required to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH). Libraries Development, LGMA is the national library advisor to both central and local government, and is charged with implementing public library strategy objectives at national level.

DRCD is a Government Department which establishes national policy and strategic direction for libraries, including the crafting of legislation and the provision of capital funding for strategic library investment. It also provides oversight and implementation structures for the strategy at national level.

The CCMA is the representative voice of the local government management network. The local authorities are responsible for implementation of the public library service, employment of library service staff and delivery of the programmes and goals resulting from the strategy to the public.

Oversight and implementation for the strategy at national level are managed by DRCD and the LGMA through inter-departmental and national agency partnerships, and by Libraries Development, LGMA through sectoral implementation committees. The Libraries Development Committee (LDC) of the LGMA, which consists of senior representatives from local authorities, DRCD, LGMA and the library sector, monitors the strategy's progress.

This strategy provides a platform to build on the local and national partnership approach of the public library service, in terms of partnering with other key government departments and national and local agencies in the delivery of the initiatives.

The resources to deliver the strategy will be provided by local authorities supported by a national capital and infrastructure and innovation program at government level.

## **2.2 Our Public Libraries 2022**

The current strategic plan covers the period 2018-2022. 'Our Public Libraries 2022 – Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities' is the Irish Government's ambitious strategy to develop the public library service in Ireland over five years. Building on technological and service innovations of recent years, it focuses on improving access, use and visibility of the public library and establishing it as the go-to place for a range of sustainable, integrated public services.

The strategy celebrates public libraries as attractive and welcoming spaces where all members of the community can access knowledge, ideas and information, and where people can reflect, connect and learn. Over the lifetime of the strategy, a focus has been placed on establishing the public library as a welcoming community hub with skilled staff providing guidance and support across a range of areas. There has also been an emphasis on supporting staff to develop and enhance their skills, and to develop their confidence and capacity to be leaders both for library users and for their fellow team members.

As the current strategy lapses in 2022, we need a new five-year plan for the period 2023-27 to fulfil the following aims:

- A national strategy establishes a forum for all stakeholders to collaborate on forming a positive, inclusive vision for public libraries, leading to a considered and grounded national policy that can transform services, buildings and resources.
- As the progress made in the previous strategies has been substantial, it is important to build on the momentum of results and outcomes already achieved. A new strategy is required to tailor this in light of the very different circumstances, new challenges and opportunities which are emerging.
- The context for our work has continued to evolve, accelerated by the pandemic and the additional development needs of library services.
- The national strategy sets the strategic context for further investment in library infrastructure, technology, programmes and services.
- The work of our partners has also evolved, and we need to refresh and further develop our relationships with them in a strategic context.

## **2.2 The Library Sector**

The delivery of a public library service to the public is the remit of the local authority. There are 30 public library services across the country, each delivered by the relevant local authority to the population in its catchment, with the exception of Galway, where Galway County provides the service on behalf of Galway City by agreement. The number of branches in each local authority service varies and the overall total number of branches in the country is not a static number but is currently at 330. Library branches vary also in size, which in turn has implications for services that are provided. Hours of opening also range,

with some small branches offering in the region of 10 hours per week, larger central branches providing up to 50 hours and an increasing number offering the My Open Library service, with unstaffed opening adding to staffed hours to offer over 98 hours of access weekly. There are c.1600 staff working in the public library sector.

Further details on library services and programming, as well as links to local library authorities, can be found on [www.librariesireland.ie](http://www.librariesireland.ie)

### **2.3 Our Partners**

Partnerships are fundamental to our work. The LGMA and DRCD will continue to engage with and develop our long-standing relationships with a family of close partners including:

- Department of Health
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Inclusion and Youth
- Department of Education
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Library Association of Ireland (LAI)
- The National Library of Ireland
- Consortium of National and University Libraries (CONUL)
- European Commission Representation in Ireland
- Creative Ireland
- Arts Council Ireland
- National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)
- SOLAS
- Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)
- Age Friendly Ireland
- Irish Writers Union (IWU)
- Children’s Books Ireland (CBI)
- Publishing Ireland
- Bookselling Ireland
- Media Literacy Ireland (MLI)
- RTE Supporting the Arts
- UNESCO
- Local Enterprise Offices (LEO)
- Irish Prison Service

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROJECT**

This project will support the development of a strategic plan for 2023-27 (inclusive) based on the needs and opportunities of the sector in line with our vision of an inclusive, modern, sustainable, and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in Ireland.

The new strategic plan should:

- Build on the strengths of our work since the last Strategy and address gaps in our activities
- Set strategic direction, and identify new areas for focus and growth, taking account of emerging needs and opportunities.
- Address the needs of the public library sector across Ireland.

- Provide a framework for our activity and investment across the five years, identifying where we can make most effective use of our resources to make a measurable difference.
- Help clarify our relationships with key partners and how we can best work together in the interests of the library sector.
- Address the development needs of the public library service and ambitions of our stakeholders, including users, staff, local authorities, government departments, elected representatives and partner organisations.

Libraries are embedded in their communities and form a vital part of our social infrastructure. The contractor will need to set the development of the strategic plan within a societal context, and be able to demonstrate their understanding of this within the tender.

#### **4. THE BRIEF**

We are seeking an expert contractor to facilitate a strategic planning process and the development of a new strategic plan for 2023-27.

The work will be overseen by the Library Development Committee and driven by a Working Group representing the Irish public library sector. The contractor will:

- Assist the Working Group in designing a detailed project plan to manage the development of the strategy and engage the Working Group and other stakeholders in all workshops and activities.
- Review Our Public Libraries 2022 strategy to identify strengths and weaknesses during implementation.
- Synthesize current issues and policy drivers in the public library sector, based on desk research.
- Facilitate workshops with the Working Group to set a draft strategic vision, and draft strategic framework.
- Facilitate a programme of consultation with all relevant stakeholders including the public. We envisage this will include a variety of channels, including online workshops and surveys.
- Facilitate discussions with our key partners to identify how we will work together to deliver the strategy.

Following the consultation phase, we wish to review the findings to incorporate them into the strategy. The contractor will:

- Collate and synthesize findings from all consultations to produce a report for the Working Group which will be the basis of further workshops.
- Facilitate workshops with the Working Group to refine the draft strategic vision and directions, and to define draft strategic actions.

At the end of this process, the contractor will:

- Produce a draft strategic outline document for the Working Group

#### **5. DELIVERABLES**

The contractor is required to produce, for consideration by the Working Group:

- A project plan to lead the strategy from development through to completion [to be agreed by the Working Group and approved by the Library Development Committee]
- A review of the Our Public Libraries 2022 strategy
- A synthesis paper of current issues and policy drivers in the public library sector to elicit stakeholder input
- A Draft strategic vision and strategic framework to facilitate consultation phase

- A report synthesizing the findings from the consultation phase
- A draft strategic outline document, incorporating all outcomes of the development process

## 6. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The contract will be directly managed by the Head of Libraries Development. The first point of contact for the selected contractor will be the Head of Libraries Development.

The selected contractor will report into the Strategic Plan Working Group, composed of representatives of the Irish public library sector.

## 7. 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
Invitation to Tender	January 24 <sup>th</sup> 2022
Closing date	9am GMT 14 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
Appointment of successful contractor	March 2022
Planning, including an initiation meeting with the Working Group, agreeing a project plan, and milestone moments through the project	March 2022
First workshops: to set the draft strategic vision and directions	April-May 2022
Consultation with library sector, stakeholders, partners and public	May-June 2022
Consultation report presented to Working Group	June 2022
Second workshops: to refine and further develop the draft plan	July 2022
Draft of plan presented to Working Group (completion of contract)	September 2022
Incorporate feedback and finalisation of strategic plan by the Working Group for endorsement by the Library Development Committee and approval by Minister	October 2022

It is planned that an agreed timeline will not be subject to change due to COVID-related restrictions. Meetings, consultations and workshops should be conducted virtually where required and as practical so that the timeline is not altered/delayed.

## 8. BUDGET

The maximum cost which can be considered for this project exclusive of VAT and all contractors' expenses is €25,000.

## 9. THE TERMS OF BUSINESS RELATING TO THE AWARD OF ANY CONTRACT

Payment at key milestones in instalments subject to satisfactory delivery of consultation phase report and final report to the Working Group.

## 10. PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

**10.1 Procurement timetable**

- Submission by 09:00 a.m. GMT on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- Award selection process completed by 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

**10.2 Proposal submission**

Please submit proposals by email to [librariesdevelopment@lgma.ie](mailto:librariesdevelopment@lgma.ie)

Proposals should be no more than 2,500 words and should include:

- Understanding of the brief.
- An outline methodology for achieving the brief.
- A statement of skills and experience of main contractor and any others to be engaged in the context of this brief including knowledge of the library environment in Ireland. The statement should include names and experience of each person assigned to the project. Examples and links to relevant formal documents and 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 anticipated for the project. If VAT registered, this must be included in your costings.
- Two contactable referees who could provide a relevant reference of suitability to work on this project.
- Tax clearance cert

**10.3 Evaluation of proposals**

We will evaluate proposals using these criteria:

CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
Extent to which proposal demonstrates an understanding of the brief and capability of the tenderer to fulfil the brief's requirements	30
Knowledge and experience relevant to the project, including familiarity with the public library environment in Ireland, experience of running consultation processes and strategic planning and developing written new strategies	30
Quality of methodology, proposed workplan and suitability of timetable	30
Cost (Value for money)	10

**11. FURTHER INFORMATION**

For an informal discussion about the work, please contact:

Head, Libraries Development Stuart Hamilton: [shamilton@lgma.ie](mailto:shamilton@lgma.ie)

**12. COMPLIANCE**

Libraries Development, LGMA reserves the right to disqualify any provider's response to this RFT 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.

Libraries Development, LGMA 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 Libraries Development, LGMA.

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

If Libraries Development, LGMA needs to change any information contained within this RFT before the closing date, you will be written to advise you of these changes, which includes the extension of any submission deadlines. Libraries Development, LGMA reserves the right to cancel or suspend this RFT process at any time but will notify you in writing as soon as possible if this occurs.