ARTS COUNCIL

Above €50,000 Call for Tender (CFT) - AC/2026/60

Provision of Assessment services 2027

Visual Arts Bursary Award

Lot 1: Round 1

Lot 2: Round 2

Date of issue: 30 October 2026

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Important Notice

This Call for Tender (**CFT**) is issued by the Arts Council (Authority) for the purposes of a tender competition (**Competition**) for the award of the Contract.

The information provided in this CFT is offered in good faith for the guidance of Tenderers, but no warranty or representation is given as to the accuracy or completeness of any of it and the Authority and its advisers shall not be under any liability for any error, misstatement or omission.

None of the information shall constitute a contract or part of a contract between the Authority and any Tenderer. The Authority reserves the right not to follow up this request in any way and/or to change the tender procedure and/or terminate discussions or the tender procedure at any time. Neither the Authority nor its officers, employees, or advisers have any responsibility for Tenderers' costs or losses in connection with this Competition. The Authority shall not be obliged to enter into a contract with any Tenderer. Except for the Tenderer's irrevocable undertaking to keep its offer open for the prescribed period, no legal relationship or other obligation shall arise between the Tenderer and the Authority unless and until the Contract the subject of this CFT has been formally executed in writing by the Authority and the successful Tenderer in this Competition and any conditions precedent to the effectiveness of such document has been fulfilled.

The Authority reserves the right to amend this document, its requirements and any information contained herein at any time by notice, in writing, to the Tenderers.

Nothing contained in this document is, or shall be relied upon as, a representation of fact or promise as to the future. Any summaries or descriptions of documents or Contractual arrangements contained in any part of this document cannot be and are not intended to be comprehensive, nor any substitute for the underlying documentation (whether existing or to be concluded in the future), and are in all respects qualified in their entirety by reference to them.

Irish law is applicable to this document. The Irish courts shall have exclusive jurisdiction in relation to any disputes arising from this document.

Each Tenderer's acceptance of delivery of this CFT constitutes its agreement to, and acceptance of, the terms set forth in this Important Notice.

PARTICULARS

A. DEFINITIONS

Authority	Means the Arts Council
Competition	Means this procurement process for the award of the Contract (if any)
Contract	Means the contract attached at Appendix 2
CFT	Means this Call for Tender and all accompanying documents, as may be amended or clarified by the Authority
Services	Means the services to be provide under the Contract, as described in Appendix 1 of this CFT
Tender	**Means a response to this CFT submitted by a Tenderer in accordance with the Tender Response Document included as a separate document (TRD)**
Tenderer	Means the individual or organisation that submits a Tender
Tender Response Document (TRD)	Means the Tender Response Document issued together with this CFT which Tenderers must complete

B. CONTRACTING AUTHORITY AND CONTRACT

B1	**Contracting Authority**	The Arts Council
B2	**Tender Reference**	AC/2026/60
B3	**Contract**	Tenders are sought from suitably qualified service providers for the provision of assessment services for the 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award. The competition is divided into two lots: • **Lot 1:** Assessment services for Round 1, with applications closing in December 2026. • **Lot 2:** Assessment services for Round 2, with applications closing in June 2027. Tenderers may submit a tender for either or both lots. Each Lot will be evaluated and awarded separately, and the same Tenderer may be awarded both lots. The Arts Council may also require assessment services for one additional bursary-type award programme during 2027. These services, if required, will be allocated to one of the lots in accordance with Item B5 and Appendix 1. Further details of the requirements are provided in Appendix 1.

B4	**Applicable procedure**	Open Tender procedure.
B5	**Duration of Contract**	Where both lots are awarded to the same Tenderer, a single contract will be entered into for Lot 1 and Lot 2. Where both lots are awarded to different Tenderers, each Lot will result in a separate contract. The anticipated initial contract periods are: • **Lot 1:** 5 months, during the period December 2026 to May 2027. • **Lot 2:** 5 months, during the period June 2027 to November 2027. The Arts Council reserves the right to include assessment services for one additional bursary-type award programme that may take place with an application closing date during 2027. Where that closing date falls on or before 30 April 2027, the additional services will be allocated to Lot 1. Where it falls after that date, they will be allocated to Lot 2. The additional programme has not been confirmed, and the Arts Council does not guarantee that this option will be exercised. The Arts Council reserves the right to extend the Contract term for each Lot for an additional period or periods of up to 6 months, with a maximum of 1 such extensions permitted subject to agreement with the successful Tenderer. This extension shall be availed of if necessary to facilitate completion of the assessment services for that Lot, and/or to deliver assessment services for the additional bursary-type award programme that may be allocated to that Lot.
B6	**Budget**	The maximum aggregate budget for both lots, including all services, the optional additional bursary-type award programme and any contract extensions, is €113,600 excluding VAT. The budget is allocated as follows: • **Lot 1. Round 1 services:** €44,000 excluding VAT. • **Lot 2. Round 2 services:** €44,000 excluding VAT. • **Contingency for the optional additional bursary-type award programme:** €25,600 excluding VAT. The contingency will be available only under the Lot to which the additional programme is allocated in accordance with Item B5. It is a single contingency across the competition and is not available separately under both lots.

		All prices must be quoted in Euro, inclusive of all costs and expenses and exclusive of VAT. The stated budgets do not constitute a commitment to expenditure.

C. SUBMISSION OF TENDER

C1	**Time and date for submission of Tenders**	Tenders must be received not later than **12.00 hours (local time) on 24-11-2026. (**"the "Tender Deadline"). Tenders that are received late WILL NOT be considered in this Competition.
C2	**Method for submission of Tenders**	Tenders must be submitted via the electronic post-box available on www.eTenders.gov.ie. Only Tenders submitted to the electronic post-box will be accepted. Tenders submitted by any other means will NOT be accepted. Tenderers must ensure that they allow themselves sufficient time to upload and submit all required tender documentation before the Tender deadline at C1 above. Tenderers should be aware that the 'Submit Response' button will be disabled automatically upon the expiration of the response deadline. Tenders must be submitted in English. All Tenders submitted must be compiled such that they can be read easily. The Arts Council is not responsible for corruption in electronic documents. Tenders must ensure electronic documents are not corrupt.

D. CLARIFICATIONS/QUERIES

D1	**Queries/Requests for Clarifications**	All queries relating to any aspect of this Competition or this CFT must be directed to the messaging facility on www.etenders.gov.ie. For the avoidance of doubt, Tenderers may not contact the Arts Council directly regarding any aspect of this Competition. All responses to queries will be issued by the Arts Council via the messaging facility on www.etenders.gov.ie Where appropriate, questions may be amalgamated. Tenderers should note that the Arts Council will not make responses to individual Tenderers privately. The Arts Council reserves the right at any time before the Tender Deadline, to update or amend the information contained in this document and/or to extend the Tender Deadline. Participating Tenderers will be informed of

		any such amendment or extension through the eTenders website. Tenderers should ensure that they register their interest in this Competition, by clicking on the "Accept" button on www.etenders.gov.ie, in order to receive all responses to queries and other updates in relation to this Competition.
D2	**Final Time and Date for Receipt of Queries**	No later than: **12.00 hours (local time) on 13-11-26.**

E. TENDER PRICING AND VALIDITY PRICING

E1	**Tender Pricing**	All Tenderers must complete the Pricing Schedule, which is included with the Tender Response Document (TRD). All prices quoted must be all-inclusive (i.e., including but not being limited to, all costs/expenses/indexation), be expressed in Euro only, and exclusive of VAT. The VAT rate(s) where applicable should be indicated separately. Any currency variation occurring over the Term of the Contract shall be borne by the Tenderer. Payments for Service provided pursuant to this CFT shall be subject to, and be made in accordance with, the terms and conditions set out Specimen Contract at Appendix 2 to this CFT.
E2	**Tender validity period**	Tenderers must confirm that all prices quoted in the Tender will remain valid for 180 days commencing from the Tender Deadline.

F. SELECTION CRITERIA

Ref:	**Selection Criteria (PASS/FAIL)**
F1	Tenderers must demonstrate operational and financial capacity through the value of relevant contracts or projects successfully managed. This will be evidenced by way of setting out the value of two contracts successfully delivered in the past five years, and indicating the number of sub-contractors / partners or assessors used on those contracts. *(Tenderers will be required to set out the value of two contracts successfully delivered in the past five years, and detail the number of sub-contractors / partners or assessors provided. Tenderers may do this for the same two contracts required for Selection Criterion F.2, below).*
F2	Tenderers must be able to demonstrate experience of providing a service of similar nature, scale and complexity to the Services required by this CFT (as described in the

	requirements set out in Appendix 1 of this CFT). This experience shall be evidenced by way of two contracts successfully delivered in the past five years. (*Tenderers must provide sufficient information to allow the Contracting Authority to judge the similarity of the reference contracts to the Services required by this CFT*).
F3	Tenderers must provide a business profile in the Tender Response Document (TRD), including information about their organisation and the personnel who will be involved in delivering any Services under the proposed Contract. Given the nature of these Services and the anticipated volumes, Tenderers must provide an indicative list of a minimum of three (3) assessors, outlining their qualifications and relevant experience. This list may include assessors who are employees of the Tenderer and/or proposed subcontracted personnel. Tenderers must also outline their organisation's capacity to meet the requirements of the Services, including a description of their organisational structure, current workforce levels, relevant expertise within the organisation, and access to additional resources (including subcontracted personnel) to ensure sufficient capacity to deliver the Services. *(This information will be used solely to confirm that the minimum requirements and capacity thresholds are met. The quality, depth and effectiveness of the proposed assessors, including their experience, skills and the Tenderer's arrangements for their management and availability, will be evaluated under the relevant award criteria).*
F4	Tenderers must confirm their acceptance of the contract terms and that, if successful, they will: • Sign the Contracting Authority's Contract (see Appendix 2 of this CFT); and • Sign the Data Processing Agreement (see Appendix 3 of this CFT). Agreeing to and signing these documents will be a condition of Award of Contract. *Note: Tenderers may request clarifications regarding the terms and conditions of the Contract or the Data Protection Agreement by submitting a request for clarifications. Any clarifications must be sought in accordance with the process outlined part "D" of the Particulars of this CFT, and should be submitted prior to the deadline for submission of clarification requests set out in D2.*
F5	Tenderers must confirm that, if requested by the Contracting Authority, they will complete the Contracting Authority's Data Protection Assessment (see Appendix 4 of this CFT) and provide all reasonably requested supporting documentation. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to determine whether the Services to be provided under this Contract give rise to any Data Protection risks. Where such risks are identified, completion of the Data Protection Assessment, if requested, will be a condition of Award of Contract. ***The Data Protection Assessment is provided for information purposes. Tenderers are not required to complete it unless requested by the Contracting Authority.***

F6	Tenderers must confirm that they shall take all reasonable steps to keep secure any Contracting Authority information that they may be provided with should they be awarded a Contract under this competition, and that they will use it only for the purposes of providing the Services. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to determine whether the Services to be provided give rise to any information security risks to its ICT infrastructure. Tenderers must confirm that, if requested by the Contracting Authority, they will complete the Third-Party Supplier Information Security Assessment (see Appendix 5 of this CFT) and provide all reasonably requested supporting documentation. Completion of this assessment, if requested, will be a condition of award of the Contract. ***The Third-Party Supplier Information Security Assessment questionnaire is provided for information purposes). Tenderers are not required to complete it unless requested by the Contracting Authority.***

G. AWARD CRITERIA

Only those Tenderers who have qualified in accordance with section "F" of this CFT will proceed to be evaluated under this section "G". In submitting a TRD, the onus is on the Tenderer to ensure that their application clearly communicates how it meets specified criteria.

No.	Award Criteria	Maximum Marks Available	Minimum Marks Required (60%)
G1	**Methodology and Approach** Tenderers must describe, in a clear and comprehensive manner, their proposed approach and methodology for the delivery of the Assessment Services for 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award and provide an implementation plan to illustrate this. The response must address the following areas: *(i)Assessments and Reports (200 marks)* Tenderers should set out a robust, end-to-end methodology for delivering assessments and producing high-quality assessment reports. Responses should include: • Tenderers must set out who the account manager for the contract will be and clearly define their expertise and function (role and responsibilities) • A detailed description of the assessment workflow and a description of reporting mechanisms, including the preparation, internal review, and timely delivery of assessment reports. • Quality assurance and moderation processes to ensure accuracy, consistency, reliability of assessment outcomes, and compliance with relevant standards or guidance. • Contract Management procedures ensuring delivery meets specification, stays within agreed cost and time parameters, and supports consistent delivery throughout the contract term. • A detailed description how they will deal with risks associated in the delivery of contract objectives – a draft risk register should be included.	300	180(60%)

	(*ii) Engagement of Assessors and Oversight (100 marks)* • A clear and credible plan for engaging assessors, including both employed and subcontracted assessors where applicable. • Evidence of effective arrangements for the management, coordination, and availability of assessors, including oversight structures, supervisory arrangements, and escalation pathways. • The proposed approach to ensuring assessors are appropriately qualified, adequately briefed, and supported throughout the contract. • Processes for performance monitoring, issue resolution, and maintaining continuity of service (e.g., maintaining a reserve pool, onboarding new assessors, ensuring adequate cover). • Measures to ensure resourcing flexibility, responsiveness to changing volumes, and the ability to scale capacity up or down as required. <u>Implementation Plan</u> (*to be addressed across both sub-criteria 'Assessments and Reports' and 'Engagement of Assessors and Oversight')* • Tenderers must provide a detailed implementation plan covering the specified period above, identifying key dates and project deliverables/milestones that will ensure delivery to specification meets quality assurance criteria, and stays within agreed cost and time parameters.		
G2	**Qualifications and experience of proposed key personnel** Tenderers should provide evidence that the Tenderer's proposed team collectively has the technical, sectoral, and practical competencies required to deliver the Services to a high standard. The response should include: *(i) Contract Manager (250 marks)* • A CV of the Contract Manager, outlining relevant qualifications, professional background, and demonstrable experience in managing similar service delivery contracts.	350	210

	(ii) Indicative list of assessors (100 marks) • Short biographies for an indicative list of at least three (3) proposed assessors, demonstrating relevant qualifications and experience.		
G3	**EDI principles and Sustainability** Tenderers should demonstrate how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles and sustainability considerations are integrated into the proposed delivery of the Services. The response should address: • How EDI principles inform the recruitment, selection, and composition of assessors. • Sustainability considerations within the supply chain, including subcontractor engagement. • Actions taken to minimise environmental impact, such as reducing travel, digital-first approaches, or responsible materials and resource use.	100	60 (60%)
G4	Proposed costs	250	N/A
	Total	**1,000**	

Methodology for scoring Qualitative Award Criteria

Score	Meaning	Interpretation
90 – 100%	Excellent	A very comprehensive response demonstrating extensive understanding and offering full assurance to the Arts Council that the tenderer will be able to deliver to an excellent standard – fully supported with no reservations.
80 – 89%	Very good	A very good response demonstrating a very good understanding and offering convincing assurance that the Tenderer will deliver to a very high standard but contains a few, mostly minor, weaknesses – fully supported.
70 – 79%	Good	A good response demonstrating a good understanding and offering assurance that the Tenderer will deliver to a high standard but contains a number of weaknesses to client – well supported.
60 – 69%	Acceptable	An acceptable response demonstrating a minimum understanding and offering assurance that the Tenderer will deliver requirements to an adequate standard but contains a number of weaknesses.
Less than 60% is unacceptable and considered ineligible from further consideration		

1 to 59%	Poor	Response demonstrates limited understanding with insufficient or no detail and a risk of non-delivery. This is unacceptable and classified as inadmissible.

Those Tenderers that have not achieved the required Minimum Marks for each of the qualitative award criteria as specified will be eliminated without having their costs assessed.

H. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

	Insurance requirements	**Indemnity Limit**
H1	Employer's Liability Insurance *Not required where the Tenderer is self-employed*	€13,000,000
H2	Public Liability Insurance *Where services are provided virtually or the contract is for product supply only, Public Liability Insurance will not be a requirement*	€6,500,000
H3	Professional Indemnity Insurance	€1,00,000

I. CONDITIONS PRIOR TO AWARD OF CONTRACT

I	**Conditions precedent to the award of the Contract**
I1	Provide evidence that the required insurance cover is currently in place or can be, if successful in the competition.
I2	Production of a valid Tax Clearance Certificate or log-in access to tax information details on the Irish Revenue Commissioners' website.
I3	Signed Tenderer Statement by authorised personnel in the organisation.
I4	Original Declaration of Personal Circumstances from each member of the Tenderer group, signed by the relevant member and witnessed by a practising solicitor/ commissioner for oaths.
I5	Any other evidence required in relation to accreditation.
I6	Production of sub-contracts / sub-consultancy appointments for approval (if applicable).
I7	Collateral Warranties from sub-contractors / sub-consultants (if applicable).
I8	Signed Data Processing Agreement by authorised personnel in the organisation
I9	Upon request by the Contracting Authority, to complete its Third-Party Supplier Information Security Assessment and to supply all reasonably requested information and documentation in support of that assessment. Should the Contracting Authority determine that the Consultant's responses do not meet its minimum information security standards, the Authority may, at its sole discretion, withdraw a decision to award the Contract.
I10	Upon request by the Contracting Authority, to complete its Data Protection Assessment and to supply all reasonably requested information and documentation in support of that assessment. Should the Contracting Authority determine that the Consultant's responses do not meet its minimum data protection standards, the Authority may, at its sole discretion, withdraw a decision to award the Contract.

J. TRANSFER OF UNDERTAKINGS – PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEES (TUPE)

J	Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employees (**TUPE**) Legislation	Tenderers must seek their own legal advice in relation to the application of TUPE Legislation to the Contract. [Employment details in relation to employees potentially affected by TUPE Legislation will be provided to Tenderers on request on execution of a confidentiality agreement.]

1. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

- *Overview*

Details of the Services required are contained in Appendix 1 of this CFT.

As set out in Clause 3.4 of the specimen Contract attached at Appendix 2, the Authority may vary the Services, including adding to or reducing the scope of Services.

2. SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

- *Deadline and Delivery of Tenders*

If the Tenderer wishes to participate, it's completed Tender, including all attachments referred to must be delivered:

- by not later than the time and date stated at Item C1 of the Particulars;
- to the post-box facility stated at Item C2 of the Particulars;

All Tenders, supporting documents and correspondence must be in English. In circumstances where an original document, which is to form part of the Tender or correspondence with the Authority, is not in the English language, Tenderers must provide an accurate English translation together with a copy of the original document. In the event of a discrepancy or difference between various languages, the version in the English language shall prevail.

2.2 *Tender Response Document*

The Tender Response Document must be completed in accordance with this CFT.

- *Compliance*

Tenders must not be qualified in any way but must be submitted in accordance with this CFT. Tenders must not include or be accompanied by any statement that could be construed as rendering the Tender equivocal and/or placing it on a different footing from other Tenders. The Authority's decision on whether a Tender is compliant will be final.

If a Tender fails to comply in any respect with the requirements set out in these CFT, the Authority shall be entitled (but shall not be obliged) to take such action as it considers appropriate at its absolute discretion, including (but not limited to):

(a) rejecting the relevant Tender as non-compliant;

(b) without prejudice to the Authority's right to reject the Tender:

(i) meeting with, raising issues and/or seeking clarification from the Tenderer in respect of the relevant Tender;

(ii) requesting the Tenderer to provide information or items which has/have not been provided or has/have been provided in an incorrect form;

(iii) waiving a requirement which, in the Authority's opinion, is minor or procedural; and/or

(iv) amending the relevant requirements of this CFT and inviting Tenderers to adjust their Tenders on the basis of such revised requirement.

However, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this section, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to ask Tenderers at any moment during the Competition to submit any or all of the following for the purposes of verification of the status of the Tenderer (including the Prime Contractor and any Subcontractor);

(i) A Declaration as to personal circumstances to tender.

(ii) Evidence to the effect that measures taken by the entity concerned are sufficient to demonstrate its reliability despite the existence of a relevant Exclusion Ground; and

(iii) in the case of the Prime Contractor and any Subcontractor on whose capacity the Prime Contractor relies, all or any of the supporting documents specified at paragraph F above.

If a Tenderer does not, upon request by the Contracting Authority, provide evidence which is considered by the Contracting Authority as sufficient to demonstrate:

(i) its fulfilment of the Selection Criteria (or any one of them) in accordance with this CFT and

(ii) the absence of Exclusion Grounds, or its reliability despite the existence of a relevant Exclusion Ground, it shall be excluded from further participation in this Competition.

If a Tenderer does not, upon request by the Contracting Authority, provide evidence which is considered by the Contracting Authority as sufficient to demonstrate:

(i) the fulfilment by any Subcontractor on whose capacity the Prime Contractor relies of the Selection Criteria (or any one of them) in accordance with this CFT; and

(ii) the absence of Exclusion Grounds in respect of any Subcontractor, or the reliability of any Subcontractor despite the existence of a relevant Exclusion Ground, it shall be excluded from further participation in this competition unless it replaces the Subcontractor with one which meets all relevant requirements of this CFT.

- ***Reliance on resources***

If a Tenderer has relied on the resources of a parent or other entity in its submission for this Competition, the Tenderer must include with its Tender a confirmation letter from such parent or other entity confirming that the resources relied upon will be made available and that a contractual commitment will be entered into by such parent or other entity at Contract execution stage if required by the Authority.

- ***Tenderer Structure***

Tenders may be submitted by single entities or by groups of service providers. A group will not be required to convert into a specific legal form in order to submit a Tender, but may be required to do so prior to award of the Contract. The Authority reserves the right, amongst other solutions, to require that the Contract be entered into with each

member of the group on the basis of joint and several liability or to Contract with one member of the group as prime consultant to whom the other members will be sub-consultants.

Where a group of service providers (in whatever form and regardless of the legal relationship between them) come together to submit a Tender in response to this CFT, the Authority will deal with all matters relating to this Competition through the entity who will carry overall responsibility for the performance of the Contract only ("Prime Consultant"), irrespective of whether or not tasks are to be performed by a subcontractor or other consortium member ("Sub-consultant"). During the performance of the Contract, the Prime Consultant shall be responsible to the Authority for the management and supervision of any Sub-consultant and for the acts and omissions of any Sub-consultant as if they were its own.

The Tenderer must clearly and comprehensively set out the name, title, telephone number, postal address, facsimile number and email address of the nominated contact personnel of the Prime Consultant authorised to represent the Tenderer and to whom all communications shall be directed and accepted until this Competition has been completed or terminated. Correspondence from any other person (including from any Sub-consultant) will NOT be accepted, acknowledged or responded to.

- ***Tenderer Statement***

  Prior Tenderers must complete and submit the Tenderer Statement set out in the Tender Response Document with their tender confirming their acceptance of the terms and conditions of the Service Contract. Tenders may not amend the Tenderer's Statement.

  The Tenderer Statement submitted with the Tender can be signed electronically. However, prior to entering into the Contract, the successful Tenderer must submit the original signed Tenderer Statement of the Tenderer.

- ***Tender Validity Period***

  Tenders must remain open for acceptance for the period specified in Item E of the Particulars.

3. QUERIES RAISED

- All queries or requests for clarification by a Tenderer should be raised in accordance with Item D1 of the Particulars. Verbal queries or requests for clarification will not be considered by the Authority.

- The Authority will endeavour to respond to all reasonable queries/requests received on or before the Final Time and Date for Receipt of Queries noted at Item D2 of the Particulars, but does not undertake to respond to all queries/requests received. The Authority may at its absolute discretion, but shall not be obliged to, reply to queries received after that date.

- All queries received, together with replies and clarifications on the points raised, may be circulated to all Tenderers. If a Tenderer believes a query/request and/or its response relates to a confidential or commercially sensitive aspect of its Tender, it must mark the

query/request as "confidential" or "commercially sensitive". If the Authority, at its discretion, is satisfied that the query/request and/or its response should be properly regarded as confidential or commercially sensitive, the nature of the query/request and its response shall be kept confidential (subject to any applicable legal requirements).

- If the Authority is of the opinion that it would be inappropriate to answer the query/request on a confidential basis, it will notify the Tenderer and require the Tenderer to either withdraw the query or to raise any objection within 2 working days of such notification and state the grounds for its objection. If the Tenderer does not withdraw the query/request or raise any objection within the specified period, or the Authority is of the opinion that, notwithstanding the objection of the Tenderer, the query/request is not confidential or commercially sensitive, the Authority may issue the query/request and its response to all of the Tenderers.

- If the Authority is of the opinion that these CFT need to be supplemented with information which clarifies or amends these CFT (including by adding to or deleting from these CFT), whether because of any query raised by a Tenderer or otherwise, it is entitled to do so at any time prior to the date for submission of Tenders.

  If a Tenderer becomes aware of any ambiguity, discrepancy, error, or omission in these CFT, it must immediately notify the Authority, even after the time for submitting queries has expired. The Authority shall, upon receipt of such notification, notify all Tenderers of its ruling in respect of any such ambiguity, discrepancy, error or omission.

4. EVALUATION PROCESS

- ***Introduction***

Tenders will be examined initially for completeness and compliance with this CFT. Where a Tender departs from the requirements in this CFT or is ambiguous, the Authority will proceed in accordance with section 2.3 of this CFT. Those Tenderers who are not eliminated following this step will have their Tenders evaluated on the basis of their responses in the Tender Response Document, in accordance with the applicable selection and award criteria set out in section F and G of the Particulars and as described in this section 4.

4.2 Selection Criteria

Tenders will either pass OR fail each of the Selection Criteria set out in part "F" of the Particulars above. In the event of one or more of the Selection Criteria achieving a fail, the Tenderer will be excluded from participating in this Competition and will not have their Tender evaluated against the award criteria set out in part "G" of the Particulars.

a) Tenderers must declare in the Tender Response Document that they satisfy the financial and economic standing requirement(s) set out in Item "F1 "above.

b) Tenderers must declare in the TRD that they satisfy the technical and professional requirements and provide the supporting documentation specified to the Contracting Authority in each case with their Tender:

   Tenderers must detail in TRD that they have successfully delivered a minimum of **two (2**) example contracts for services similar in nature and scope to the Services required as described at Appendix 1 of this CFT:

a. The entity that performed the Services under the relevant reference contract must be the entity proposed to provide the relevant Services under the Contract.

b. Tenderers must ensure that they provide sufficient information to allow the Contracting Authority to judge the similarity of the reference contracts to the Services required by this CFT.

c. The tenderer must provide the name and contact details of a referee from the customer organisation (in the relevant section of TRD) that can confirm the information provided by the Tenderer is true and accurate.

d. Where the Tenderer fails or is unable to provide the specified documentation or if the information provided does not demonstrate that the Tenderer has provided the services as described above within the last five (5) years, the Tenderer will be eliminated from the Competition.

c) Using the template provided in the TRD, Tenderers are required to provide the following information about their business and the personnel who will be involved in carrying out any Contract awarded, including:

- Company/Organisation profile and background regarding current business activities;
- Address of office from which the proposed Services will be provided.

Tenderers must submit details of organisational structure, current workforce levels, and a breakdown of the number of consultants with the relevant skillset and expertise by professional grade/level within the company and background regarding current business activities as set out in this RFT. The Contracting Authority will consider whether the organisational structure and capacity is sufficient to meet the requirements of the Contract

d) Tenderers must confirm their acceptance of the contract terms and that, if successful, they will:

- Sign the Contracting Authority's Contract (see Appendix 2 of this CFT); and
- Sign the Data Protection Agreement (see Appendix 3 of this CFT).

Agreeing to and signing these documents will be a condition of Award of Contract.

Tenderers may seek clarifications in relation to the Contract and the Data Processing Agreement by submitting a request for clarifications in accordance with the process set out in section "D" of the Particulars above.

The Contracting Authority may, where appropriate, issue amendments or clarifications to the Contract documents in response to clarification requests received before the Tender Submission Deadline. Any such amendments will be issued to all Tenderers in accordance with the RFT procedures. No material changes to the Service Contract or the Data Processing Agreement will be made after the Tender Submission Deadline.

e) Tenderers must confirm that, if requested by the Contracting Authority, they will complete the Contracting Authority's Data Protection Assessment (see Appendix 4 of this CFT) and provide all reasonably requested supporting documentation.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to determine whether the Services to be provided under the Contract give rise to any Data Protection risks. Where such risks are identified, completion of the Data Protection Assessment, if requested, will be a condition of Award of Contract. Should the Contracting Authority determine that the Tenderer's responses do not meet its minimum data protection standards, it reserves the right not to award the Contract to the Tenderer.

Note: The Data Protection Assessment questionnaire is provided for information purposes. Tenderers are not required to complete it unless requested by the Contracting Authority.

f) Tenderers must confirm that they shall take all reasonable steps to keep secure any Contracting Authority information that they may be provided with should they be awarded a Contract under this competition, and that they will use it only for the purposes of providing the Services.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to determine whether the Services to be provided give rise to any information security risks to its ICT infrastructure. Tenderers must confirm that, if requested by the Contracting Authority, they will complete the Third-Party Supplier Information Security Assessment (see Appendix 5 of this CFT) and provide all reasonably requested supporting documentation.

Completion of this assessment, if requested, will be a condition of award of the Contract. Should the Contracting Authority determine that the Tenderer's responses do not meet its minimum information security standards, it reserves the right not to award the Contract to the Tenderer.

Note: The Third-Party Supplier Information Security Assessment questionnaire is provided for information purposes). Tenderers are not required to complete it unless requested by the Contracting Authority.

Tenderers must provide the supporting documentation specified above without delay when requested by the Contracting Authority. Where the Tenderer is unable for a valid reason, to provide the specified documentation, the Tenderer must inform the Contracting Authority of that valid reason as to why the documentation cannot be supplied and, if the Contracting Authority considers the reason given to be valid, such other suitable alternative documentation.

4.3 *Award Criteria*

The criteria that will be applied by the Authority to determine the most economically advantageous tender are set out in Item G of the Particulars.

The qualitative award criteria will be evaluated solely against the information provided by Tenderers in the Tender Response Document ("TRD").

Each of the award criteria will be assessed on an overall basis. A mark will be awarded to each criterion in accordance with the scoring methodology set out below. The individual mark within each band will be allocated based on the respective merit of the response within the category. A **minimum score of 60%** is required to pass each criterion. A Tenderer not receiving the minimum % score required for any criterion will not be evaluated further and will be eliminated from the Competition.

Qualitative award criteria will be assessed first. Tenderers that have not achieved the required minimum % score for any of qualitative award criteria will be eliminated from the Competition

without having their costs assessed and their proposed prices will not be considered for the purposes of cost evaluation.

Those Tenderers that score a mark equal to or in excess of the minimum % score required for each of the award criteria will proceed to have their Cost evaluated.

The lowest cost tender that also meets all the minimum requirements of the qualitative award criteria will receive the maximum score achievable under this criterion. The scores of the other valid tenders will be calculated using the following formula:

Evaluation of Cost Formula	$\frac{\text{Lowest Tendered Rate}}{\text{Tendered Rate under evaluation}}$	**X**	**Maximum Marks available**

Tenderers must not use abnormally high or low rates in their Tender. This prohibition includes using strategies that might allow the Tenderer to benefit disproportionately in relation to the valuation for work or interim payments for work done. Each rate must properly cover the full inclusive value of the work to which the amount relates.

If, in the Authority's opinion, the overall tendered amount is abnormally low or any tendered rates (including any rates tendered for valuation of extra [services/supplies]) are abnormally low or abnormally high, the Authority may require the Tenderer to provide further written details of the constituent elements of the overall tendered amount or the tendered rates or any other information which the Authority considers relevant. This may include (without limitation) the information listed in Regulation 69 of the European Union (Award of Public Authorities' Contracts) Regulations 2016. Any failure to provide such information, where requested, may exclude the Tender from further consideration. If, having considered the information provided, the Authority is of the view that either the overall tendered amount is abnormally low or any tendered rates are abnormally low or abnormally high, the Authority may reject the Tender.

4.4 Ranking of Tenders

The quality and price scores of Tenders which have not been eliminated will be added and the Tender receiving the highest overall score will be the most economically advantageous tender.

- ***Clarification/Further Information***

  The Authority may seek clarification or further information or both from one or more of the Tenderers. The Authority may meet with one or more Tenderers for these purposes at an Authority-nominated date and venue and/or may seek clarification in writing only as it considers appropriate. It must be understood that the clarification provides that no material amendments may be made to the Tender where this gives rise to a breach of the applicable law

- ***Presentation of Proposal***

Tenderers may be required to make a presentation of the proposal contained in their Tender. The Arts Council will not be responsible for the cost of such presentations (in accordance with paragraph 7.12). Performance at presentations will NOT be evaluated.

5. STEPS FOLLOWING TENDER ASSESSMENT

5.1 Notification - Standstill

As soon as practicable after the Authority has made a decision to award the Contract, the Authority will notify all Tenderers of the outcome of this Competition. In accordance with EU Review Procedures no contract can or will be executed or take effect until at least fourteen (14) calendar days after the day on which the Tenderers have been sent a notice informing them of the result of this Competition (the "Standstill Period") if such notice is sent by electronic means. The Standstill Period shall be sixteen (16) calendar days if such notice is sent by other means.

The preferred bidder will be notified of the decision of the Contracting Authority and of the expiry date of the Standstill Period. This notification will not form the Contract or any contract or other obligation and specifically will not oblige the Authority to award or enter into the Contract.

Tenderers should note that the Contracting Authority may, when notifying Tenderers of the results of this Competition, include the scores obtained by the Tenderer concerned and the scores obtained by the preferred bidder in respect of each award criterion assessed by the Contracting Authority.

5.2 Conditions Precedent to Contract Award

The Authority may issue to the Tenderer identified as having submitted the most economically advantageous tender a letter of intent requiring that Tenderer to submit to the Authority any or all of the documents listed in Items J of the Particulars together with any other items that the Authority deems appropriate.

The issue of a letter of intent by the Authority shall not in any way constitute the award of a contract and the Contract shall not come into force in any way without formal execution of the Contract by the Authority and the successful Tenderer.

If the Tenderer to whom such a letter of intent is addressed does not submit the documents as required within the time allowed, the Authority may take such steps as it considers appropriate at its discretion, including (but not limited to):

(a) executing the Contract with the Tenderer to whom the letter of intent was addressed (even though the documents have not yet been provided); or

(b) allowing the Tenderer to whom the letter of intent was addressed additional time to provide the documents; or

(c) proceeding according to the process in this section [5] to initiate award to the Tenderer who submitted the next most economically advantageous tender.

5.3 Letter of Acceptance

The Authority will inform the successful Tenderer of the arrangements for the execution of the Contract. The Authority may create the Contract by issuing a Letter of Acceptance at any time (subject to the observance of any standstill period which may be required by law).

5.4 Award of Runner-Up

If for any reason, it is not possible to award a Contract to the designated successful Tenderer(s) emerging from this Competition, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award the Contract to the next highest scoring Tenderer based on the terms advertised at any time during the tender validity period. Where an award to the next highest scoring Tenderer is not possible, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award a Contract to the next highest scoring Tenderer, and so on. This shall be without prejudice to the right of the Contracting Authority to cancel this Competition and/or initiate a new contract award procedure at its sole discretion

6 PROPOSED CONTRACT

6.1 Form of Contract

A specimen of the Contract to be entered into between the Authority and the successful Tenderer is attached as Appendix 2. The Authority reserves the right to amend the draft Contract at any stage during the Competition. Tenderers may not make any changes to the draft Contract.

7 GENERAL PROVISIONS

7.1 Confidentiality and publicity

Tenderers must treat their Tenders and their participation in this Competition as confidential.

All details of this CFT and accompanying documents must be treated as private and confidential and shall not be disclosed to any other party except where this is necessary for the Tenderer to prepare and submit its Tender and then only on a confidential basis, or as required by law.

In the event of a Tender not being submitted, or being unsuccessful, the Authority may require that the whole of the documentation issued by the Authority in connection with the Competition, together with all copies made, shall be returned to the Authority or destroyed, at the Authority's discretion.

Tenderers shall not at any time release information concerning these CFT and/or the scope of supplies and/or services for publication in the press or on radio, television, screen or any other medium.

The Authority shall have the right to publicise, or otherwise disclose, to any person, information regarding the Contract, the identity of Tenderers (including details of their respective members), the Competition or the award of the Contract (including, without limitation, details of the Contract price) at any time.

7.2 Registrable Interest

Any registrable interest involving the Tenderer and the Authority or employees/representatives of the Authority or their relatives must be fully disclosed in the Tender or should be communicated to the Authority immediately upon such information

becoming known to the Tenderer, in the event of this information only coming to their notice after the submission of a Tender.

The terms 'registrable interest' and 'relative' shall be interpreted as per Section 2 of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995. The Authority will, at its absolute discretion, decide on the appropriate course of action, which may in appropriate circumstances include eliminating a Tenderer from the Competition.

7.3 Freedom of Information

In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the Freedom of Information Act, 2014 and the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2014 (together "FoIA"), all information submitted to the Authority may be disclosed in response to a request made pursuant to FoIA or otherwise as required by law.

Tenderers are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in response to this CFT should not be disclosed because of its sensitivity. If this is the case, Tenderers should specify the information that is sensitive and the reasons for its sensitivity. The Authority cannot guarantee that any information provided by Tenderers, either in response to this Tender or in the course of any contract awarded as a result thereof, will not be released pursuant to the Authority's obligations under law, including the FoIA. The Authority accepts no liability whatsoever in respect of any information provided which is subsequently released or in respect of any consequential damage suffered as a result of such disclosure.

7.4 Environmental, Social and Labour Laws

In the performance of any Service Contract awarded, the successful Tender(s), and their sub-contractors (if any) shall be required to comply with all applicable obligations in the field of environmental, social, and labour law that apply at the place where the Service provided, that have been established by EU law, national law, collective agreements or by international, environmental, social, and labour law listed in Schedule 7 of the Regulations.

Tenders shall be required to include an undertaking to comply fully with the provisions of Council Directive 2001/23/EC of 12 March 2011 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the safeguarding of employees' rights in the event of transfer of undertakings, business or parts of undertaking of business and as implemented in Irish law by statutory Instrument S.I. No. 131 of 2003 European Communities (Protection of Employees on Transfer of Undertakings) Regulations 2003 and to indemnify the Contracting Authority for any claim arising or loss of costs incurred as a result of its failure or incapacity to fulfil its obligations under the said Directive and Statutory Instrument.

The Protection of Employees (Temporary Agency Work) Act 2012 (the "2012 Act") provides that the Agency Worker (as defined in the 2012 Act) is entitled to the same basic working and employment conditions as those which apply to employees recruited directly by the Hirer (as defined in the 2012 Act) to do the same or a similar job. Where the provision of the Services will involve the provision to the Contracting Authority of agency Workers (within the meaning of the 2012 Act), Tenderers should ensure that they consider their obligations under the 2012 Act when pricing their Tender. The Contracting Authority shall have no liability for any increase in salaries that may be payable as a result of the application of the 2012 Act to the provision of the Services.

7.5 *Governing Law*

This Competition and any Contract awarded on foot of this Competition will be governed by Irish law.

7.6 Conflict of interest

Any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest on the part of a Tenderer or any director, officer, member (in the case of a group or consortium), employee, agent or subcontractor must be fully disclosed to the Authority as soon as such conflict or potential conflict becomes apparent. In the event of any conflict or potential conflict of interest, the Authority may (but shall not be obliged to) invite Tenderers to propose means by which the conflict might be averted. The Authority shall, in its absolute discretion, decide on the appropriate course of action which may include eliminating the Tenderer from the Competition.

7.7 Canvassing/Interference

No contact must be made with the Authority or any of its staff other than by the methods laid out in this CFT. Oral discussions will not be considered binding. A Tenderer must not rely on any statement or representation made to it at any time by persons acting on behalf of the Authority unless they are confirmed in writing as an amendment to this CFT.

Any Tenderer who unduly influences, or attempts to unduly influence, the Authority, its staff or any other relevant persons or bodies involved in this Competition (including canvassing) in relation to the conduct or outcome of this Competition will have their Tender rejected.

If a Tenderer is found to have offered, given or agreed to offer or give to any person any gift, gratuity, commission or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for doing or forbearing to do, or having done or forborne to do, any action in relation to the obtaining of its Tender or execution of this Competition, or for showing or forbearing to show any favour or disfavour to any person in relation to this Competition, the Tenderer will be automatically disqualified and the circumstances surrounding such action will be referred to the appropriate authority.

In accordance with Section 38 of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 any money, gift or other consideration from a person holding or seeking to obtain a contract will be deemed to have been paid or given corruptly unless the contrary is proved.

7.8 *Collusive Tendering*

Tenderers are strictly prohibited from discussing any aspect of their Tender with other Tenderers or otherwise exchanging information or colluding in respect of the Competition. Any Tenderer who fails to comply with this requirement may be disqualified. Tenderers' attention is drawn to the Competition Act, 2002, as amended, which makes it a criminal offence for Tenderers to collude on prices or terms in a public procurement competition.

7.9 Data Protection

"Data Protection Laws" means all applicable national and EU data protection laws, regulations and guidelines including but not limited to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of

such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (the "General Data Protection Regulation"), and any guidelines and codes of practice issued by the Office of the Data Protection Commission for data protection in Ireland.

The Authority will be a controller (where controller has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) in respect of any personal data (where personal data has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) required to be provided by the Tenderer in response to this CFT.

The Tenderer, as controller in respect of any personal data provided by it in its Tender, is required to confirm by way of statement in the Tender Response Form that all data subjects (where data subject has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) whose personal data is provided by the Tenderer have consented to the processing of such personal data by the Tenderer, the Authority, the evaluation team and the supplier of the etenders.gov.ie website, for the purposes of the participation of the Tenderer in this Competition or that the Tenderer otherwise has a legal basis for providing such personal data to the Authority for the purposes of its participation in this Competition.

In addition to entering into a Contract for Services, the Successful Tenderer shall also enter into a Data Processing Agreement with the Authority. A specimen of the Data Processing Agreement to be entered into between the Authority and the successful Tenderer is attached as Appendix 3. The Authority reserves the right to amend the draft Agreement at any stage during the Competition. Tenderers may not make any changes to the draft Agreement.

7.10 Tenderer Confirmation

By submitting a Tender in response to this CFT, a Tenderer confirms that it has satisfied itself, from its own investigation, about all of the requirements of this CFT.

7.11 Clarification Meetings/Presentations

The Authority reserves the right to hold clarification meetings with Tenderers and/or to ask Tenderers to present all or part of their Tender. Clarification meetings and/or presentations will not be evaluated. Tenderers must bear all costs and expenses related to such meetings and/or presentations.

7.12 Tendering Costs

Tenderers shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of their Tenders. The Authority shall not be responsible and/or liable to pay for any costs, expenses or losses which may be incurred by a Tenderer in the preparation or submission of its tender or in relation to any interviews, presentations, clarifications or additional information that may arise following submission, or otherwise incurred by the Tenderers in connection with this Competition, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the Competition.

7.13 Key Personnel

Tenderers should note that any change to the Key Personnel is subject to Authority approval.

The Authority reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to withhold such approval for any such change and to disqualify the Tenderer from further participation in the Competition. In the event that the Authority withholds its approval for a change in the Key Personnel, the Tenderer may be given an opportunity to submit a different team member for approval, subject to compliance with applicable laws.

Tenderers should also note Clause 5.2 and 7.1 of the specimen Contract relating to changes in Key Personnel and any approved third party personnel.

7.14 Change in Circumstances

Without prejudice to the provisions of section [7.7] above, if as a result of a change in circumstances or otherwise, any information given by a Tenderer in its Tender, or otherwise, was (when submitted) or has become (by reference to the facts as they then stand) untrue, incomplete or misleading, the Tenderer must so inform the Authority as soon as it becomes aware of this. The Authority reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to withhold approval for any such changes and to disqualify the Tenderer from further participation in the Competition.

If it comes to the Authority's attention that:

7.14.1 there has been a change in circumstances concerning a Tenderer or member of a Tenderer that could affect the Authority's assessment of that Tenderer's Tender; or

7.14.2 information submitted by a Tenderer was (when submitted) or has become (by reference to the facts as they then stand) untrue, incomplete or misleading, the Authority may (but is not required to) revise its assessment of the Tenderer's Tender on the basis of the information then available to the Authority.

7.15 Declaration of Personal Circumstances

Tenderers, including any Sub-contractor or consortium member, must complete the Declaration of Personal Circumstances in the Tender Response Document. If, at the time of the award decision, any of the grounds for exclusion in the Declaration of Personal Circumstances apply to the Tenderer (or any member of the Tenderer group or Sub-contractor), the Tenderer may be excluded from the Competition. The Declaration of Personal Circumstances can be signed by the Tenderer, consortium member and/or Sub-contractor electronically. However, prior to entering into the Contract, the successful Tenderer must submit the original signed Declaration of Personal Circumstances, including an original signature by a practising solicitor/commissioner for oaths.

7.16 Independent Enquiries

The Authority reserves the right to make independent trade, credit and security inquiries about Tenderers before identifying a preferred Tenderer or awarding any Contract. Tenderers may be requested to provide financial and trade references as well as further biographical details of the Key Personnel for this purpose.

APPENDIX 1 BACKGROUND, REQUIREMENTS & SPECIFICATIONS

1. About the Arts Council

The Arts Council /An Chomhairle Ealaíon is the Irish government agency for developing the arts. We work in partnership with artists, arts organisations, public policy makers and others to build a central place for the arts in Irish life. The Arts Council is guided by its Strategy "Making Great Art Work". We set policy to ensure that all of our funding is spent strategically, that all of our actions reflect the long-term interests of the public and that all of our decisions are transparent and fair. We aim to have policies which are current and relevant and which reflect our role as an expert agency in the arts.

In line with national and EU regulations, including the Employment Equality Acts and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, we seek to embed inclusive practices that reflect public sector values and enhance the social impact of our procurement and aim to align the nine principles **gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community** of the Equal Status Act with sustainable procurement.

For further information on the Arts Council, please visit our website www.artscouncil.ie.

2. Visual Arts

The Council's policy in Visual Arts is informed by the twin objectives of support for the artist and public engagement. The Arts Council is dedicated to supporting a vibrant visual arts ecology so that visual artists can develop work of ambition and so that the public can experience exceptional visual art in urban and in rural parts of Ireland. We achieve this inter-alia through a range of supports from infrastructural organisations to key multi-disciplinary venues and festivals, and support to visual arts activity throughout the country. The Arts Council operates a range of funding programmes that support the development of artists and their art practice, the creation, presentation and dissemination of work and audience participation and engagement with the work of artists. The Arts Council also engages in strategic partnerships and initiatives to support, develop and promote the visual arts in Ireland. For further information please refer to the Visual Arts section on the Arts Council website.

As the volume of applications to the Visual Arts Bursary Award has grown in recent years, the services required are divided into different Lots. This tender/contract relates specifically to the provision of Assessment Services of the 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award, broken into two Lots. Lot 1 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Round 1 and Lot 2 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Round 2. Refer to the Part B (Contracting Authority And Contract) of the Particulars section of this CFT document for details on the duration and nature of the Lots.

The table below provides volumes of applications to Bursary in previous years.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Bursary Round 1	205	279	406	519	437
Bursary Round 2	220	199	410	363	401
Total	425	478	816	882	838

The objective of the 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award is to support professional artists or curators at any stage of their career to develop their practice. It provides artists or curators with the time and resources to think, research, reflect and critically engage with their work, when they are at a critical stage in their practice.

For details on the opening and closing dates, as well as the broader Arts Council awards schedule, please visit our website.

3. Scope of Contract and Core Contract Requirements:

The Arts Council seeks tenders from suitably qualified Contract Managers to provide Assessment Services of Arts Council for bursary-type awards including:

- 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award Round 1 and provision for an additional bursary-type award in the calendar year, should the award application deadline date occur on or before 30 April 2027.
- 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award Round 2 and provision for an additional bursary-type award in the calendar year, should the award application deadline date occur after 30 April 2027.

The services sought are primarily to appraise and assess applications, ensure editorial oversight and moderation, and to provide an overview report with headlines and insights. Service providers may propose to work with sub-contractors to deliver the services, if necessary. Please see the Required Services below for details on the required services.

Lot 1: 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Round 1

- Assessments and Reports
- Appraisal and assessment of funding applications for the 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award Round 1
- A 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Round 1 Award Report with key insights and findings based on qualitative and quantitative data
- Engagement of Assessors and Oversight
- Sourcing, engagement and oversight of suitably qualified assessors
- Administrative coordination of applications

- Assessment services for an additional bursary-type award programme may be required under this Lot where its application closing date falls on or 30 April 2027. See the note below for full details.

The estimated number of written assessments required for Lot 1:

Award	Primary Assessments	Secondary Assessments
2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award Round 1	480	75
Contingency for additional bursary-type award	*320*	*75*

Lot 2: 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Round 2

- Assessments and Reports
- Appraisal and assessment of funding applications for the 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award Round 2
- A 2027 Visual Arts Bursary Round 2 Award Report with key insights and findings based on qualitative and quantitative data
- Engagement of Assessors and Oversight
- Sourcing, engagement and oversight of suitably qualified assessors
- Administrative coordination of applications.
- Assessment services for an additional bursary-type award programme may be required under this Lot where its application closing date falls after 30 April 2027. See the note below for full details.

The estimated number of written assessments required for Lot 2:

Award	Primary Assessments	Secondary Assessments
2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award Round 2	480	75
Contingency for additional bursary-type award	*320*	*75*

Primary assessments are full assessments and are required where the Visual Arts Assessment takes priority in informing a decision or recommendation. Primary assessments are usually between 300 – 600 words in total. Secondary assessments are usually shorter and are intended to provide context and advice to other arts teams and where responsibility for a decision or recommendation rests with another arts team. This would apply where the visual arts forms only one aspect of a proposal. Secondary assessments are usually between 100 – 250 words in total.

Our experience is that, on average, the Contract Manager typically, delivers overall, 5 Bursary Award assessments in a day of work.

Timeline:

Lot 1:
This may require up to c. 110 days of work over the course of 5 months, generally between the months of December 2026 – May 2027, and this should be included within the price of the proposal.
There is an 11–18-week window to undertake all primary and secondary assessments associated with this funding round.

Lot 2:
This may require up to c. 110 days of work over the course of 5 months, generally between the months of June – November 2027, and this should be included within the price of the proposal.
There is generally an 8–11-week window to undertake all primary and secondary assessments associated with each funding round.

Contingency for additional bursary-type award
This may require up to c. 64 days of work over the course of 4 months, and this should be included within the price of the proposal. Assessment services for the additional bursary-type award programme may be required under Lot 1 where its application closing date is before 30 April 2027, and Lot 2 where its application closing date falls after 30 April 2027.
There is generally an 8–11-week window to undertake all primary and secondary assessments associated with each funding round.

In light of the schedule and volume of assessments, it is anticipated that a minimum of 3-8 assessors may be required for the delivery of the services. The Contract Manager will inform the Visual Arts team of the assessors they intend to engage. All proposed appointments will be subject to final approval by the Visual Arts team. It is expected that the assessors will have been largely sourced prior to the closing date of the award and formally engaged by the Contract Manager shortly thereafter. The final number of assessors required will depend on the actual number of applications received.

Awards	Closing Date
2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award Round 1	December 2026
2027 Visual Arts Bursary Award Round 2	June 2027
Contingency for additional bursary-type award	*(subject to confirmation)*

Note 1: The representation of the volume of applications received and the exact period in which the work must be undertaken, while based on recent patterns, are provided for information purposes only. The actual quantity of assessments required, and the specific timeframe involved is subject to variation and will, in any event, be agreed as part of a work Programme.

Note 2: To assist in considering the scope of the specified funding application assessment work, for further information please refer to the Arts Council's Visual Arts Bursary Award webpage, which features funding information, the recent guidelines and application form.

Note 3: It is important that Tenderers demonstrate that they will be available to deliver all required services, particularly during peak periods. Appropriate sub-contracting of assessment or other work to approved assessors may be submitted in your proposal.

4. Contract Management

The Arts Council requires tenderers to nominate a dedicated Contract Manager who will act as the main point of contact for the duration of the contract. This person shall have the authority to deal with all matters in relation to contracts and be responsible for the satisfactory delivery of the supplies/services required.

The duties of the Contract Manager will include the following:

- Approach at the commencement of the contract
- Overall responsibility for a good working relationship with the Arts Council
- Meet as and when required to review and examine performance
- Identify, source and manage a group of assessors
- Provide oversight of the assessment process, including moderating, reviewing and editing assessments as required to ensure quality and consistency
- Prepare final award reports with key insights and findings based on qualitative and quantitative data
- Deal with disputes, complaints or concerns that cannot be adequately resolved
- Regularly give and receive both formal and informal feedback on the relationship, workloads, processes, areas and suggestions for improvement and cost savings;
- Provide details of contract management reports proposed including content, frequency, etc.
- Ensure quality control measures are in place to deliver the services.
- Proactively discuss with the Arts Council, ways of improving efficiency regarding service delivery in general and providing suggestions for improvement and cost savings.

NOTE: Tenderers will note that contract management activities will be non-billable. The Arts Council will nominate authorised staff to liaise with the successful Tenderer.

Service delivery expectations

It is expected and required that the successful Tenderer will, upon appointment as the Contractor, deliver the services set out above in compliance with the following requirements:

Delivery of Assessments

- The Contractor must conduct assessments in accordance with the procedures, standards, and timelines specified by the Arts Council.
- Assessments must be completed to a high standard of accuracy, consistency, and fairness.

- The Contractor must implement processes to ensure transparent and traceable assessment decision-making.

Production of Reports

- The Contractor must prepare assessment reports that are clear, structured, and evidence based.
- Reports must undergo internal quality assurance and be delivered within the required timeframes.
- The Contractor must allow for revisions or clarifications where required by the Arts Council.

Resource Planning & Capacity Management

- The Contractor must ensure sufficient capacity to meet varying volumes of assessments, including during peak demand.

Engagement and Oversight of Assessors

- The Contractor must recruit, contract, brief, and manage assessors to ensure they are competent and available to deliver services.
- Oversight structures must ensure appropriate supervision, performance monitoring, and problem resolution.
- Subcontracted assessors must be managed to the same standards as employed staff.

Communication & Coordination

- The Contractor must maintain effective communication channels with the Arts Council and within the assessor team.
- The Contractor must respond promptly to queries, requests, and instructions.

Information Security

- The Contractor shall take reasonable steps to keep all Authority information secure and to use it only for the purposes of providing the Services. The Contractor shall notify the Authority promptly if they become aware of any loss, misuse, or unauthorised access to such information.

The Arts Council reserves the right to determine whether the Services provided by the Contractor give rise to any information security risks to its ICT infrastructure. Where such risks are identified, the Arts Council may require the Contractor to complete its Third-Party Supplier Information Security Assessment and to supply all reasonably requested information and documentation in support of that assessment. Should the Authority determine that the Consultant's responses do not meet its minimum information security standards, the Authority may, at its sole discretion, terminate this Agreement without liability.

A copy of the Third-Party Supplier Information Security Assessment questionnaire has been provided alongside this document for information purposes (see Appendix 5, Appendix 6). You are not required to complete it unless requested to do so by us.

Data Protection

- The Contractor shall comply with Irish Data Protection legislation. The Contractor shall notify the Authority promptly if they become aware of any loss, misuse, or unauthorised access to personal data.

The Arts Council reserves the right to determine whether the Services provided by the Contractor give rise to any data protection risks. Where such risks are identified, the Arts Council may require the Contractor to complete its Data Protection Assessment and to supply all reasonably requested information and documentation in support of that assessment. Should the Authority determine that the Consultant's responses do not meet its minimum data protection standards, the Authority may, at its sole discretion, terminate this Agreement without liability. A copy of the Data Protection Assessment questionnaire has been provided alongside this document for information purposes (see Appendix 4, Appendix 6). You are not required to complete it unless requested to do so by us.

5. Qualifications and experience of proposed key personnel

The Arts Council requires the services of a single service provider for each Lot, with suitable experience, qualifications and resources. To competently deliver the required services the successful tenderer will need to allocate personnel to the project with the appropriate and relevant expertise and experience.

The Tenderer must provide details of the Contract Manager, and an indicative list of a minimum of 3 assessors, who they would allocate to the Arts Council account if their tender is successful, in the TRD. In doing so, the tenderer should show a commitment to continuous professional development to ensure assessors are sufficiently skilled in new technologies and approaches.

Tenderers must demonstrate that the person(s) proposed for delivering the required services have the necessary experience and qualifications. In order to satisfy that requirement, tenderers must provide the following with their tender in the format outlined in the TRD:

- An up-to-date CV of the Contract Manager, clearly outlining their relevant experience and qualifications.
- A short biographical summary for each indicative assessor proposed by the Contract Manager to be involved in the delivery and/or co-ordination of the services. Each summary should include the assessor's name, relevant experience and qualifications.
- Each biographical summary should contain a list of previous contracts delivered by the assessor, that the tenderer believes is of direct relevance and benefit to the Arts Council requirements. Please include no more than a maximum of four (4) such examples for each person.
- Each biographical summary should also contain the assessment proposed role of each person.

Tenderers are required to show how the team will be balanced to provide the full scope of the services required and also have the breadth and range of experience and expertise to deliver the Arts Council's requirements.

6. EDI principles and Sustainability

The Arts Council that the successful Tenderer will, upon appointment as the Contractor, deliver the services set out above in compliance Equality, Diversity & Inclusion principles and in a sustainable way.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

- The Contractor must ensure its assessment processes are fair, inclusive, and free from discrimination or bias.
- The Contractor should demonstrate EDI considerations in how assessors are recruited, selected, and deployed.
- The Contractor must comply with equality legislation and any additional EDI requirements set out by the Contracting Authority.

Sustainable and Ethical Supply Chain

- The Contractor must take reasonable steps to source goods or services (including subcontractor relationships) in a manner consistent with sustainability and ethical labour practices.
- Subcontractor arrangements must align with EDI and sustainability principles.

Environmental Sustainability

- The Contractor must minimise environmental impact during service delivery—e.g., through reduced travel, digital-first processes, efficient resource use.
- Environmentally sustainable working methods should be reflected in the proposed approach.

7. Proposed Costs

Tenderers are required to complete the Pricing Schedule in the Tender Response Document (TRD).

The Contract will be managed according to a daily rate that reflects the estimated number of written assessments set out in part 3. Required Services of this Appendix 1.

Tenderers should ensure that all associated costs, including administrative costs, editorial oversight, moderation and the assessors' fees, and final report writing are integrated into the proposed daily rate.

The maximum budget allocated for the completion of the services is set out in Item B6 of the Particulars. It is for the full duration of the contract, including all contract extensions and tenderers should not exceed this when preparing their submission.

All pricing must be quoted in Euro and must be inclusive of expenses and quoted exclusive of VAT.

APPENDIX 2 SPECIMEN CONTRACT

The Contract that the successful Tenderer shall enter into with the Authority is provided as a separate document.

Please refer to attached separate document which is available for downloading at www.eTenders.gov.ie with this document and Contract notice.

APPENDIX 3 SPECIMEN DATA PROCESSING AGREEMENT

The successful Tenderer shall be required to enter into a Data Processing Agreement with the Authority. The Agreement is provided as a separate document.

Please refer to attached separate document which is available for downloading at www.eTenders.gov.ie with this document and Contract notice.

APPENDIX 4 SPECIMEN DATA PROTECTION ASSESSMENT

The successful Tenderer may be required to undertake a Data Protection Assessment by the Authority. The Data Protection Assessment is provided as a separate document.

Please refer to attached separate document which is available for downloading at www.eTenders.gov.ie with this document and Contract notice.

APPENDIX 5 SPECIMEN THIRD-PARTY SUPPLIER INFORMATION SECURITY ASSESSMENT

The successful Tenderer may be required to undertake a Third-Party Supplier Information Security Assessment by the Authority. The Third-Party Supplier Information Security Assessment is provided as a separate document.

Please refer to attached separate document which is available for downloading at www.eTenders.gov.ie with this document and Contract notice.

APPENDIX 6 SPECIMEN 3RD PARTY SUPPLIER DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE - SHORT FORM FOR INDIVIDUALS & MICRO BUSINESSES

The successful Tenderer may be required to undertake a 3rd Party Supplier Data Protection and Information Security Questionnaire - Short Form for Individuals & Micro Businesses. The 3rd Party Supplier Data

Protection and Information Security Questionnaire - Short Form for Individuals & Micro Businesses is provided as a separate document.

Please refer to attached separate document which is available for downloading at www.eTenders.gov.ie with this document and Contract notice.