ENGLISH HERITAGE

National Heritage Protection Plan

NHPP Supporting Action Project brief for:

Identifying Current Archaeological Reference Resources

Project No: 7030

Date of Issue – July 2014

1. Project Summary

This brief sets out the criteria for tenders for a project to identify and compile what reference resources (typologies, reference collections etc) are available and being used in the archaeological and archaeological science sector and what major gaps there are in their coverage. This will provide a valuable resource for the sector and will inform English Heritage's funding for future reference resources.

2. Background

Reference resources are the essential building blocks of historic environment research. They help researchers to identify, understand, document, analyse and report all aspects of past human life including the natural and historic environment. They are used to inform all areas of basic and applied research, including identification, classification, chronological sequencing and site comparison.

Reference resources are used by specialists in all areas of archaeological investigation, including development-led, academic and specialist society and community group research.

This project is to identify specifically archaeological and archaeological science reference resources (see scope section for definition). Reference resources for the historic building sector are excluded from this project. This is due to the sheer potential volume of built environment reference resources available. The research tools used by and required by historic building specialists will be investigated in a future project

3. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project is for English Heritage to gain a better understanding of what reference resources are being used by the archaeology sector, as well as identifying any major gaps.

The objectives are to:

1   Identify what reference resources are currently available/being used by the archaeology sector.

2   Create a point-in time database of these reference resources and record basic information on their composition, coverage, date, availability, access, etc.

3   Identify and collate information about any barriers to the use of these reference resouces. For example if they are out of print.

4   Identify and collate information on threats to exsiting reference resources e.g. curation and maintainence of reference collections

5   Assess the costs and benefits of developing and maintaining an online database of these resources as a tool for use by the sector.

6   Highlight major gaps and weakenesses in coverage and currency of reference resources.

4. Business Case

English Heritage has been funding the creation of reference resources for over twenty years through various funding streams, including the Historic Environment Enabling Programme (HEEP), the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) and currently the National Heritage Protection Commissions Programme (NHPCP). Reference resources are fundamental for archaeological analysis and classification of the material remains of the past, however, there has been no investigation into what reference resources are actually available and being used by the sector.

Having a better understanding of what resources are available in the sector and what gaps need filling will inform English Heritage's prioritisation of future funding of reference resources.

This requirement has been highlighted in English Heritage Strategy for Developing Research Resources (Miles, 2013[1]):

9.2   Identification and Prioritisation of Gaps

9.2.2   Identify the Research Resources in use and gaps in coverage, and create a system to prioritise funding.

Understanding the gaps in coverage of reference resources will not only inform English Heritage's funding priorities, but could also highlight gaps for other funding bodies, for example the UK Research Councils.

The sector will benefit from this project from the better targeted funding of reference resources and the transparency in the decision making. Less time will be lost by applicants for funding if they have a better understanding of what English Heritage will consider funding.

Making the results of this project (report and database) available to the historic environment sector will provide an important resource in its own right. They will provide historic envrionment local authority staff, specialists, contractors, academics, university students and community groups with a better understanding of what reference resources are available, where they are and information on their scope and coverage.

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1   Miles, D. 2013 English Heritage Strategy for Developing Research Resources available at:
     http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/strategies/research-resources/

This is a data collection project to create a report and associated point-in-time database of currently used resources which will be made publicly available. However, the potential is that the information collated could be used in the future to develop an online database of these resources as a tool for use by the sector.

This project will be a Supporting Action of the National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP, http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/national-heritage-protection-plan/). This sets out how English Heritage, with sector partners, will prioritise and deliver heritage protection for the period up to 2015.
The project will be funded specifically to: "ensure that information management and knowledge transfer is as good as it can be so that what we learn can be used to its greatest benefit" (NHPP 3rd Dec 2012). See table 2, Essential Supporting Actions, underpinning the EH Action Plan - B4: Research resources (frameworks, research tools). http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/k-o/nhpp-action-plan.pdf

5. Project Scope

Reference resources are defined for the scope of this project as the resources used in archaeological and archaeological science practice including physical collections (e.g comparative biological collections, ceramic fabric-type reference collections, research collections of human remains), corpora (digital and printed), typologies and reference databases.

Resources used in the investigation of both artefacts and ecofacts should be included. Existing databases of reference collections (eg BABAO database of skeletal remains) will be indexed at a collection level reference.

Out of scope are any reference resources associated with buildings, building fittings and fixtures, attached sculpture and sites and landscapes.

Also out of scope is the creation of an online version of this collected data and should not be included in tenders.

5. Method

The successful contractor will take on full responsibility for the planning, management, delivery and reporting back to English Heritage of the project. Without prescribing the methodology, the contractor is expected to take into consideration the following:

The project will engage with the specialist archaeology community in collecting the data and identifying the gaps. This should include:

- specialist societies and groups
- individual specialists
- university departments
- commercial archaeological units

- museum archaeologists
- IfA special interest groups
- The Portable Antiquity Scheme
- English Heritage Intervention & Analysis Team
- Local authority historic environment staff

Any costs incurred in consulting these stakeholders, outlined above, should be incorporated into the tender.

A literature review to identify reference resources used in the sector and any gaps should be undertaken. This should include:

- Specialist and excavation reports.
- local authority project briefs.
- Written schemes of investigation.
- Research Frameworks etc...

Basic information (metadata) will be collected on each of reference resource. This should include "resource discovery" metadata, eg location, availability, assess, nature of references, as well as more in-depth information, eg currency of resources. Suggested metadata to be collected should be included in Project Designs returned in response to this brief.

Dissemination of the project results will be the responsibility of English Heritage. Project Designs returned in response to the brief should expand on the details above and demonstrate a clear methodology that will meet the project's aims and objectives, although some minor modifications may be required at initiation stage after discussion with English Heritage. Contractors should also demonstrate an understanding of the specialist archaeological sector.

6. Products

Key products are:

P1) The creation of a Current Position Report, including the identification of gaps and costs/benefits analysis for future development of the database created through the project.

P2) A database of Reference Resources providing metadata for each resource.

Submitted project designs must provide product descriptions for these products as an annex, following the format on page 47 of the MoRPHE Project Managers Guide.

7. Tasks

Project Designs returned in response to this brief should include a detailed task list – see Guidance for Tendered Projects: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/guidance-tendered-projects/tendered-guidance.pdf

8. Timetable

Subject to approval of the final project design, the proposed timetable of the project is:

Project Initiation: 1st October 2014.

Delivery of draft report: 30th April 2015

Final report: within two weeks of comments received from English Heritage

9. Budget

The estimated budget range for this project is c. £20,000 – 25,000 (excluding VAT).

10. Form of tender: MoRPHE Style Project Designs

The tender submission should refer to the National Heritage Protection Commissions Programme Guidance for Tendered Projects

The Project Design should also include:

- a document-control grid with contact details (see MoRPHE p42)
- costs calculated according to the Guidance for Tendered Projects and set out per financial year
- a task list which includes days per person, per task (see Guidance for Tendered Projects)
- a risk log;
- a Gantt chart and/or timetable.

The structure of a Project Design can be found on pp 44-47 of the MoRPHE project managers' guide which can be downloaded at: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/MoRPHE and the Guidance for Tendered Projects can be downloaded at: www.english-heritage.org.uk/nhpcp

For any questions about the project please contact Dan Miles, Research Resources Officer, Heritage Protection Department, English Heritage Daniel.miles@english-heritage.org.uk Tel: 01793 414057

Any queries relating to the tender process and project documentation should be addressed to Charlotte Garratt (National Heritage Protection Commissions, Heritage Protection and Planning) charlotte.garratt@english-heritage.org.uk Tel: 020 73942987.

11. Copyright

The hard copy and digital documentation produced under this project will be the copyright of English Heritage. Copyright on all reports submitted will reside with English Heritage, although a third-party in-perpetuity licence will automatically be given for reproduction of the works by the originator, subject to agreement in writing from English Heritage.

12. Selection process

Tenders will be appraised at a formal tender board comprised of three or more appropriate English Heritage officers, and will be scored in accordance with the English Heritage Procurement Regulations. English Heritage may consult externally as well as internally when appraising the tenders. Successful and unsuccessful tenders will be notified of the results of the tender board in writing usually within a week.

Appraisal Criteria as follows:

Appreciation of Brief/EH requirements
Methodology
Relevant experience of project team
Organisational capability/quality assurance

13. Administration of contract

The grant award will be administered via a standard English Heritage NHPCP contract. If the tender is a sole trader, rather than a limited company, association or partnership, then we would advise that early contact be made in order that an Employment Status Questionnaire (a requirement of English Heritage by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) can be completed to demonstrate registered self employed status in advance of tender.

14. Management, monitoring and reporting arrangements

The project will be administered through the National Heritage Protection Commissions Programme (NHPCP); for guidance see http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/funding/grants/grants-available/nhpcp/.

English Heritage Project Assurance and routine monitoring of standards and progress will be undertaken by an NHPC Project Assurance Officer.

The Project Executive and project team member responsible for internal Project Assurance should be specified in the Project Design (please note these roles can be undertaken by one person, but Project Assurance should not be part of the Project Manager's role; see MoRPHE pp.16-18).

The Commissioned Organisation's Project Manager will be responsible for liaison with the English Heritage Project Assurance Officer, and expected to produce highlight reports (see MoRPHE Project Managers Guide p. 48) at appropriate points throughout the project. Submit an end-of-project report (see MoRPHE Project Managers Guide p. 49) and complete an OASIS form for the project.

For advice and support completing OASIS forms please email oasis@english-heritage.org.uk

If you would like this document in a different format, please contact or Customer Services department:
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