

Invitation to tender for a study of barriers to resource sharing among libraries

The Tender

The Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP) invites tenders for a study of barriers to resource sharing among libraries, with particular reference to libraries in higher education institutions.

The Problem

Many libraries have undertaken overlap studies and have arranged various levels of reciprocal access. However, the notion of real deep level resource sharing (for example, where one institution agrees to collect material in a particular discipline, allowing other institutions to stop collecting in that field) remains less than widely practised and is not believed to be a policy aggressively pursued anywhere. It is believed that many barriers contribute to this and that these are not fully understood.

The Proposed Study

The proposed study will involve a review of practice in six metropolitan areas with some tradition of sharing, and one additional city, and will look at the successes and the barriers to deep resource sharing. It is proposed to investigate the situation in London (including the situation in relation to the British Library, the M25 group of libraries and the University of London, including SAS Libraries), Manchester, Sheffield, West Midlands, Glasgow, Sunderland and Edinburgh. Three case studies would be undertaken in depth and would examine the reasons for failure to proceed to deep resource sharing, as well as identifying good practice. Although the study will be concerned principally with Higher Education practice, a review of cross-sectoral arrangements (or lack of them) should be included. A number of related studies have been completed recently that should complement the proposed study. A general overview of the national scene should also be included. In addition, it is expected that successful contender will examine arrangements in one non-UK location, for example, Boston (Massachusetts).

Suggested areas of study

The study will look at the attitudinal, organisational and legal barriers to co-operation. Among the matters to be considered are the following:

Users

A select sample of users should be canvassed for their views. Subject to discussion with the funder, this element of the study may be outsourced.

Funding structures

In spite of best intentions and efforts, collaboration can be hindered by inflexible funding arrangements both within and across sectors.

Personal

Attitudes and personal relationships of:

- Vice-Chancellors
- Chief Information Officers
- Chief Librarians

Barriers originating in libraries

- Attitudes and roles of library staff such as subject specialists
- Reality and fears of unbalanced sharing
- Technical capacity:-
 - Library System incompatibility
 - Access control system incompatibility
 - Inter-lending system incompatibility
- Space issues
- Stock issues, including restrictions on some stock
- Unwillingness to extend borrowing rights

Barriers originating in institutions

- Library Committee attitudes
- Senate attitudes
- Governing Body attitudes
- Inability to share financial resources
- Real costs
- Ability to make long term arrangements

Legal barriers (whether institutional or contractual)

- Formal requirements on stock disposal
- Formal requirements on access
- Formal requirements on deposited collections
- Contracts with suppliers, especially for electronic information

Deliverable

The deliverable will be a report that is suitable for circulation to the higher education community, and to other interested stakeholders. A draft of the report must be submitted for review by the funder within six months of the award of the contract. It should be amended, if necessary, in the light of the reviewers' comments. The Higher Education Funding Bodies will own copyright in the report. The report must also be made available to the sponsor in electronic form suitable for Web publication.

Value of the contract

The maximum value of the contract is expected to be no more than £50,000 (excluding VAT).

Timescale

It is intended that the contract will be awarded in order to allow a start by August, with completion and delivery of the report by late January 2002.

Selection process

Bids should be no longer than six sides of A4 in length. CVs of the staff carrying out the work should be attached to the submission.

Proposals must include a description of the work to be carried out, timescales and milestones, as appropriate, and a budget breakdown.

Submissions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of understanding of the issues relating to resource sharing among libraries
2. Suggested approach to carrying out the work
3. Qualifications and experience of staff involved
4. Value for money

The deadline for submission of bids is 5pm on **Tuesday 19 June**. Six copies (hard copy) of each bid should be sent to

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Enquiries may be addressed to Mr Milne (telephone: 0131 651 1494; e-mail: ronald.milne@ed.ac.uk), or to Ms Gill Davenport, RSLP Programme Administrator (telephone: 0131 651 1516; e-mail: gill.davenport@ed.ac.uk).

Interviews will take place **in Edinburgh on the afternoon of 2 July 2001**.

Further information relating to the Research Support Libraries Programme may be found on the Programme website, available at <<http://www.rslp.ac.uk>>.