



Essential Networks project

Invitation to tender for Structured Learning Programmes

1 Summary

The Heritage Network (formerly Heritage Trust Network) seeks to appoint an individual or organisation, familiar with the heritage sector to deliver two structured learning programmes as part of its National Lottery Heritage Fund supported project, Essential Networks.

As part of the Enhanced Community Heritage Support work strand of the Essential Networks project, the structured learning programmes (Network Academy) in 2025 and 2026 will take a cohort of community heritage staff and volunteers through series of training events on topics that meet their needs.

This commission will be supported by Heritage Network staff, who will provide secretariat and technical support during online sessions. The commission will be monitored and evaluated.

2 Background

The Heritage Network is the membership body for independent community organisations, charities and social enterprises that are saving, restoring and managing historic buildings, parks, gardens, canals and railways. Our membership includes both organisations specifically set up to save heritage sites and community organisations that deliver other types of services and have chosen to operate from historic buildings and spaces. We also welcome individuals, businesses and local authorities that support local heritage action. Together we organise conferences, site visits, meetings and online resources where we can network and learn from each other and meet experts and funders.

Essential Networks is a major development and resilience project for the Heritage Network, our members and UK heritage. It will resource the Network over the next four years as a major sector infrastructure organisation to provide significantly enhanced support to small and medium sized community-led heritage organisations.

During the project's development phase we piloted a successful structured learning programme for a cohort of 14 member organisations between November 2023 and January 2024. All members had been surveyed on the prospect of a structured learning programme. This included the format it should take, and the topics that should be covered. 66 responses were received, and the topics identified as priorities were fundraising, engaging wider and more diverse audiences and marketing/communications. The responses to the survey also included suggestions that action learning sets would be a useful structure and for there to be an element of co-design and peer learning with sessions tailored to delegates' needs.

A discovery event was held in late November 2023 to provide potential participants with more information. Participation in the pilot was by application, and those successful would complete several online learning and reflection sessions throughout December to January 2024. The programme involved a discovery session, 3 learning sessions and 2 reflection/action planning sessions.



At the end of the pilot 70% of participants said they would pay to attend a similar programme in future, with ticket prices £100 each.

3 Objective

The objective of the programmes is for leaders (staff, trustees or lead volunteers) of organisations with ambitions to make a step change in their effectiveness to develop new partnerships; engage new groups of people; grow their earned income, have a bigger impact on their local area or take on new projects.

The main outcome of these programmes will be raising the skills and confidence of leaders within member organisations, to improve their organisation's delivery, resilience and engagement, enabling them to secure funding, raise earned income and be more successful organisations.

The programmes will primarily be aimed at helping Heritage Network members fulfil the National Lottery Heritage Fund investment principle:

- Organisational sustainability

and will contribute to:

- Inclusion, access and participation
- Protecting the environment

4 Scope of services

The work required is as follows:

4.1 Designing

The contractor will work with the Heritage Network to develop a survey that will capture the most popular topics for learning amongst our membership. The contractor will work with the Heritage Network to design the programme including content and structure.

During the pilot, the participants felt that time for reflection, networking and working together on real issues in small breakout groups or pairs was important. Enough time should be built into this programme for this to be effective.

4.2 Delivering

The 2025 programme will be promoted between July and September, with the aim of recruiting a cohort of approximately 14. A discovery event will take place during this period with two aims:

- To help promote the programme to interested member organisations
- To introduce an element of co-design through the contractor discussing with potential participants their ambitions and challenges and preferred learning styles, enabling the programme to be refined to better meet their needs.

The 2025 programme of 6-8 sessions will be delivered from October to December with the 2026 programme following a similar schedule in the following year.



The Heritage Network uses Zoom and Padlet for training sessions, however we would be open to using the Contractor’s preferred platforms as long as they are accessible and inclusive.

We do not envisage event recordings being shared beyond the cohort, however, resources and slides must be able to be made widely available in line with National Lottery Heritage Fund requirements.

4.3 Post-programme

The contractor will be expected to participate in a debrief session with the Heritage Network and an evaluation session with the Essential Networks’ project evaluator. This will take place online and/or by telephone.

All the above activity should be carried out and recorded using the Network’s agreed systems and in accordance with our data handling procedures.

5 What are we looking for?

We are looking for an individual or organisation that has:

- An understanding of the institutional and business context of the Heritage Network’s work
- Experience of delivering structured learning programmes to cultural, heritage or community organisations, some of which may be volunteer-led

6 Timetable

Contractor commissioned and inception meeting takes place	May 2025	
Survey of members	Early June 2025	Designed in collaboration with the contractor and Network staff. Disseminated by the Heritage Network
Planning of 2025 programme	June to July 2025	The Heritage Network and contractor
Promotion of the programme and recruitment of participants	July to September 2025	The Heritage Network Contractor helps deliver discovery event
Delivery of the programme	October to December 2025	Contractor. Heritage Network will provide the secretariat
Debrief and evaluation of the programme	January 2026	The Heritage Network, contractor, participants and evaluation consultant
Planning of 2026 programme	Spring 2026	



7 Budget

The maximum budget for this work is £20,000 excluding VAT. A payment schedule will be agreed with the appointed individual or organisation.

8 How to apply

Bidders are required to

1. complete [this online form](#) to provide business information. We advise you to do this as early as possible so that we are aware that you are bidding and can share with you any clarifications that we issue.
2. submit a written response to the brief of no more than 6 pages providing information on:
 - People: Details of the individuals that will undertake this work highlighting how they meet the requirements set out above at section 5. Specify who will be the lead person
 - Experience: Three relevant examples of where you have undertaken similar work in the past
 - Approach: Outline your response to the brief above and how you will approach the different phases of the work.
 - Budget breakdown: A breakdown of time allocated for each element of your programme and a total cost including expenses.
 - References: Contact details from two projects you have been involved with that we can contact for a reference

Note that we will not accept any other materials beyond 6 pages. Please do not attach any other appendices or supporting documents. Additional documents will not be considered. Your submission should be a pdf. The minimum font size for your submission should be 11pt. We will not be liable for any costs you incur in submitting your tender.

Tenders should be emailed to Beverley Gormley beverley.gormley@heritagetrustnetwork.org.uk by **12 midday on 21st May 2025**. We reserve the right not to consider any submissions where the tender document or business information form is received after the deadline.

Any questions should be emailed to Beverley Gormley beverley.gormley@heritagetrustnetwork.org.uk and they will be answered in writing. Clarifications may be shared with all known bidders. We cannot guarantee to answer clarification queries after midday on 14th May 2025.

We reserve the right not to appoint.

9 Procurement timescale

24/4/25	Invitation to tender advertised
21/5/25 at 12 mid-day	Deadline for submissions
29/5/25	Interviews
End of May 2025	Appointment



10 Evaluation

Responses will be evaluated on the basis of the initial submission. Higher scoring bidders' references will be taken up and they may be invited to interview. Scores may then be adjusted. Responses will be scored as follows:

Score	Classification	Characteristics
4	Excellent	Exemplary response. Comprehensive and relevant information is provided and the response provides the evaluation panel with a very high level of confidence that the bidder will be able to meet the requirements of the project if appointed, with no reservations or concerns arising from the response.
3	Good	Comprehensive and relevant information is provided and the response provides the evaluation panel with a high level of confidence that the bidder will be able to meet the requirements of the project if appointed with no more than one limited reservation or concern arising from the response.
2	Satisfactory	A broad response with an adequate level of information provided that is relevant and the response provides the evaluation panel with at least a good level of confidence that the bidder will be able to meet the requirements of the project if appointed with no more than minor reservations or concerns arising from the response.
1	Poor	The response is limited and lacking in relation to a large proportion of material elements and leaves the evaluation panel with significant reservations or concerns around the ability of the bidder to meet the requirements of the project if appointed.
0	Unacceptable	No response or extremely limited response that does not suggest that the bidder has the ability to meet the requirements of the project if appointed.

In assessing your experience and approach we will take account of your track-record and proposed approach regarding equality, diversity and inclusion, sustainability and social impact.

Sections included in tenders as set out above, have been allocated a weighting which will be applied to the scores as follows:

Section	Weighting (%)
People	20%
Experience	30%
Approach	30%
Cost	20%

There is a maximum budget for this 2-year programme of £20,000 excluding VAT.



The Network does not necessarily want, and is not required, to appoint the cheapest bid but needs to include price within the evaluation to ensure a robust process and evidence of pursuing value for money through procurement. The Network will not cover costs associated with preparation of tender materials.

You will be assessed on your cost before VAT, but please make clear whether you will need to charge VAT or not.

The cost elements of the tenders will be scored with the lowest cost scoring 4 and the scores of other tenders will be calculated on the basis of:

Lowest cost/cost of tender being scored x 4

Therefore if A's bid was the lowest tender at £19,500 and B's bid £20,000

A would score 4 and B would score $19,500/20,000 \times 4 = 3.9$