

Shared Service Layer - Notifications Alpha (SL-22)

Closes : Friday 8th January - 23:59

1. Summary

1.1 Description

Catalyst aims to help civil society organisations to reuse more tech, rather than building custom solutions each time. In order to do this we have set up a series of interventions, one of which is service layers.

Service layers create a piece of functionality which many charities can use to achieve similar things.

This project is to create an alpha version of one of those layers - **Notifications**.

Many charities need to send notifications to service users, often as confirmations or reminders of appointments.

Charities use many commercial products for this, but those products may stop being supported, or become obsolete.

This project is to develop an Alpha of that software using, where possible, the learnings, product development and open source codebase of GOV.UK Notify, so that a standardised approach can be carried as fully as possible into the charity sector and wider civic society.

Description of the work:

Development and deployment of an Alpha of the product which other organisations can integrate with and use as part of their product.

Integration of at least one notification sending platform to send SMS messages

The API for the product should follow as closely as possible the API for GOV.UK's Notify product so that the knowledge of development organisations with prior experience of integrating with that product can be carried over into wider civic society:

<https://docs.notifications.service.gov.uk/rest-api.html#rest-api-documentation>

The API must include an authentication layer where charities/digital partners can provide credentials. This layer will need to adhere to agreed standards.

The solution should be able to be hosted on an instance, or container or using a serverless host (AWS Lambda or similar).

This is an opportunity for you to have a meaningful impact on communities most affected by COVID.

We hope that the outputs you create will be shared and used across the sector, and will continue to be developed and iterated in response to evolving needs.

We are looking to work with 1 agency or digital support organisation. You may subcontract to freelancers and other organisations.

1.2 Budget

We would like you to submit your budget using the template provided, incorporating your proposed costs to create service blueprints or service recipes that will benefit the wider sector.

Across all of the Technical Service Element briefs we have an **average budget of £40k (including VAT) each**.

We're aware that some of these briefs will be able to be delivered for under that budget, and some would create even greater value if the budget was higher.

Rather than providing a set budget-ceiling for individual briefs; in the interests of transparency and in order to invite you to tell us how you can maximise the value delivered through this work, we're inviting responses to these tenders without setting an upper limit - but sharing the average amounts we're in a position to allocate.

Our assessors will look for the proposals which aim to maximise the value provided within each brief and use the submitted budgets to understand the realistic resource/time that will be committed to deliver the work.

2. Key Dates

2.2	6 January 2021	Deadline for asking questions
2.3	8 January 2021 11.59pm	Closing date for applications
2.4	22 January 2021	Applicants notified
2.5	Early February 2021	Project Kick-Off
2.6	End April 2021	Project Complete

3. How to Apply

3.1	Applying	Apply for this opportunity online at: http://thecatalyst.smapply.io/
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4. Assessment process and Criteria

4.1	Eligibility criteria	<p>You must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be incorporated• be insured (£250k prof indemnity, £5M public liability, £10M employers liability)• have the capacity/availability to engage• provide up to date accounts showing you are financially viable long term• provide privacy, safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion and GDPR policies <p>Please refer to the Catalyst digital partners Handbook for eligibility and assessment general guidance.</p>
4.2	Essential skills and experience	Software development, software deployment, integration with external providers, developing interoperability layers, API authentication, implementation of reporting middleware, serverless hosting.
4.3	Nice-to-have skills and experience	<p>Publishing open source software, documenting open source software, working with Open Standards and existing APIs, experience of GOV.UK Notify.</p> <p>You will ideally have worked with at least one VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise).</p>

4.4	Assessment Criteria	<p>Your approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well your proposal meets the brief, and how well we think you understand the problem • How you're going to approach the problem - for example what your plan, assumptions, and key milestones are • How well you've identified risks and suggested ways of mitigating them <p>Your experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skills your team offers • How much experience you have of similar projects • Identification of risks and plan to mitigate them. <p>Your values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well your organisation's values and ways of working align with our Catalyst values – being user led, inclusive, and ethical. <p>Value for money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether you bid offers value for money • Note that we aren't looking for the lowest price, so please don't undersell yourself
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3.5	Budgeting considerations	<p>Your budget should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enough time for team building, exploration and co-creating objectives and outcomes for this work with the nonprofits before diving into outputs. • 2 days to engage with our Learning Partner at the end of the project.
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5. Project Overview

This section outlines the challenge that you should be responding to in your application.

5.1	Problem to be solved	How might we create a shared notification sending platform for civic society organisations which is as similar to GOV.UK Notify as possible so that knowledge transfer is retained and reuse is maximised?
5.2	Who the users are and what they	Software developers and project managers in digital suppliers supporting charities.

need to do

Digital teams within charities and civic society organisations

5.3 Work already
completed

Analysis of GOV.UK Notify.

6. Key Deliverables

6.1 Expected
outcomes for
this work

Expected outputs include:

- Standardised documentation for the product, including detailed instructions for creating instances of the product in local, staging and production environments
 - API documentation
 - Configuration documentation
 - Weeknotes for the process of development
 - Weekly project updates
 - Commented source code adhering to best practices
 - Product deployed to an alpha environment
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6.2 Open working
and designing for
reuse

Open Outputs

All outputs you develop for this project must be available under an open licence (e.g. Open Source and Creative Commons licenses). IP will be held by CAST on behalf of the Catalyst network.

Designing for Reuse

All solutions should be designed and developed with reuse in mind. This should include customisation and configuration, where possible, to create a solution that can be quickly reused by other organisations serving users with similar sets of needs.

Working in the open

You will be supported to “work in the open” as much as possible, generating open outputs early and often, including some of the following: personas, anonymised user research, user stories, user needs statements, sprint playbacks and weeknotes. This will help other organisations with similar needs understand the development process and thinking behind decisions made.

7. How we work

7.1	KPIs	We will work with you to decide some appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs). You will be expected to report regularly, probably monthly with the opportunity to review and adapt the KPIs at certain points.
7.2	IP & Data Protection	<p>Any IP generated from the work that is funded through Catalyst will be held on trust by CAST - more information here.</p> <p>If you are successful you will need to complete and sign data protection schedules if you are processing any personal information on our behalf. These agreements will establish start and end dates when data is allowed to be processed, after which it should either be anonymised or deleted.</p>

8. Payment

8.1	Payment approach	<p>Please invoice us for the agreed fee in three equal instalments. The first invoice may be issued when you sign the contract, the second invoice may be issued half way through the programme, and the final invoice should be issued at the end of the programme.</p> <p>Assuming you are on track with all activities and deliverables, each invoice will be paid within 30 days of our receiving it.</p>
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About the Programme

The Shared Service Elements programme is part of the Catalyst and The National Lottery Community Fund COVID-19 Digital Response funding initiative; a partnership between [The National Lottery Community Fund](#) and [CAST](#), supported by [the Catalyst network](#).

Bidder Questions

Please send any questions you may have about this brief to partners@wearecast.org.uk before the deadline for questions.

We will post all anonymised versions of the question below.

#	Question	Answer
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- 1** We'd like to bid for all of the shared services briefs in one, is this possible?
- Sadly not. You can absolutely apply for all of the shared service briefs, as long as your organisation has capacity to carry out the work.
- However they will all need to be individual applications as we will need to be able to compare your application for each individual brief with other applicants for that brief. Your response to each individual brief should explain why you are a good fit for it and should be considered to be self contained (this is because not all assessors will read every response, but will read responses to individual briefs). It should also be considered as a self contained response as you may not be selected for some of the briefs and so cross relations and economies of scale must be avoided.
- A large amount of the material is shared between briefs, so hopefully it will be easy to copy over the bulk of the materials so that you don't need to start from scratch each time.
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- 2** Are the outcomes listed in the brief as expected? We would have expected to see a key outcome to be source code and maybe the service hosted to an alpha environment?
- Thank you, you're quite correct. The expected outputs do include source code and the service hosted in an alpha environment. We appear to have a copy paste error in expected outputs from another brief, our apologies. We've amended the brief to read:
- Expected outputs include:
- Standardised documentation for the product, including detailed instructions for creating instances of the product in local, staging and production environments
 - API documentation
 - Configuration documentation
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- Weeknotes for the process of development
 - Weekly project updates
 - Commented source code adhering to best practices
 - Product deployed to an alpha environment

3 Is your definition of alpha the same as in the GOV.UK Service Manual?

Yes, our definition of Alpha is the same. We wrote a simple definition of phases in this [blog post](#)

[The phases of products. Some little badges you'll start seeing soon.](#)

4 In the brief you mention analysis that was done in an earlier phase, e.g review GOV.UK Notify. Are you able to share this analysis with us?

The work in our review of the suitability of the Notify API was as follows:

We briefly analysed the needs of charities we knew were sending messages and checked that nothing they were planning to do would be impossible with Notify in conversations with the GOV.UK Notify team. Sadly again there is nothing documented publicly as these were privileged conversations with the Notify team.
