



BIC Task & Finish Working Group
Project Briefing Document

Document Status: Open to BIC Members
Project Name: e4libraries Accreditation Scheme Review
Version Number: 20130521
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Created date: 21052013

BIC Committee Approval

This Document was approved by the BIC Libraries Committee, August 2013.

Document History

| Version | Summary of Changes | Document Status | Date published |
|-----------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 20130503 | Final changes following input from BIC Library Committee – involving Scope and Benefits | DRAFT | 03/05/13 |
| 20130514 | Paul Dalton suggested changes on how to accredit consortia, accreditation target percentage, accred should apply to all library organisations, and importance of savings. | DRAFT | 14/05/13 |
| 20130521 | Simon Edwards incorporated Paul Dalton's suggestions and added names of 2 members of T & F WG | DRAFT | 21/05/13 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. PURPOSE**
- 2. BACKGROUND**
- 3. PROJECT DEFINITION**
- 4. OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE**
- 5. CUSTOMERS QUALITY EXPECTATIONS**
- 6. ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA**
- 7. ANY KNOWN RISKS**
- 8. OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN**

1. PURPOSE

This is a Task & Finish Working Group Project Briefing document for a review of the e4libraries Accreditation Scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

E4libraries was originally a research project to look at the library supply chain and decide on key areas where the application of technology, standards and best practice could be of benefit in improving service and reducing costs in both public and academic libraries. The research indicated the following key areas:

- bibliographic supply (Product metadata and cataloguing)
- Full cycle EDI (e-commerce/EDI to include quotes, orders, order fulfilment, invoices)
- RFID solutions (Self-service, stock management, sortation etc.)
- Systems Integration (especially between invoicing and payment systems)

Libraries which implemented these solutions and standards could apply for accreditation to reward themselves and encourage others to do the same. The scheme has been live for several years and a review is now required to ensure that it is still fit for purpose.

Since its inception there have been many changes in the library sector. These include:

- MLA closure
- Increased market demand for ebooks and e-readers
- New applications involving RFID and related technologies
- Increased prevalence of consortia and consortial buying of systems
- Rise of social networking
- New BIC Library Committee

The main problem with the existing scheme apart from not reflecting the latest changes, is that it has only attracted a few library authorities/universities and these tend to be the ones already involved in BIC. It has not managed to spread the scheme more widely and the hope is that the new improved scheme will attract many more applicants. Over the duration of the scheme some alternative ideas were generated for improving take up and it might be worth documenting these briefly:

1. Opt Out Scheme – this involves BIC consulting library stock, systems and service suppliers and building a picture of the capability of all known libraries. The capable libraries are then accredited by BIC unless they opt out. This would generate many accreditations and set a good example for other libraries who are less capable to follow suit and invest in beneficial technologies and standards.
2. Legal Requirement – At one point campaigners for libraries questioned whether government should make e4libraries accreditation mandatory for all UK public libraries. If a totally robust and auditable scheme was developed which could become mandatory

over a number of years this would help to force local authorities to invest in their library services. - Clearly, there are many political and legal pitfalls to this idea.

3. Consortial Accreditation. This is the idea of reviewing the capabilities of all the members of a consortium and applying an accreditation to the whole consortium (as well as to individual library authorities/universities etc.) The idea is to gain many more accreditations by accrediting in bulk. Of course the accredited libraries still have to be fully capable. Where a consortium has some excellent performers and some weaker performers, the scheme could accredit the excellent and perhaps set specific targets for the weaker performers. Once these are reached the consortium can be accredited as a whole. The idea is for the consortium to influence the weaker performers and encourage them to catch up.

3. PROJECT DEFINITION

3.1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project objective is to review the e4libraries accreditation scheme and if possible develop an improved scheme to measure library performance against certain criteria.

The work involved in this project will consist of a number of meetings at Task & finish Working Group (T&FWG) level (this group to be made up of appropriate experts) to review the existing scheme and to agree improvements. Such improvements, once agreed, by the T&FWG, will ultimately need to be signed off by the Library Committee bearing in mind the requirements and scope of this briefing document.

The expected business benefits include:

1. Encouraging libraries to reduce costs and improve services using systems and standards
2. Enabling BIC to provide benefits to BIC members and the library sector as a whole
3. Ensuring the Accreditation Scheme reflects current Library industry workflows and practices

A rough estimate of the current accredited percentage of UK libraries is about 15%. A successful scheme might set a target of over 50%. The idea being to have more than half of the UK libraries accredited. This could then put pressure on the others. A higher percentage would put more pressure on. The T&F WG should set a target percentage.

Another way of judging its success might be to have two levels of performance and see measurable increases in performance over time. So silver and gold accreditation levels could keep libraries who are accredited at silver to strive for gold. The T&F WG will have to decide on these issues.

3.2. PROJECT SCOPE

The project scope includes public and academic libraries and their suppliers including systems and service providers and stock suppliers. The areas to be encouraged/tested/accredited currently include: bibliographic services (product metadata) including internal and external databases, discoverability, record supply,

cataloguing etc., e-commerce (EDI), RFID (mostly self issue and return with some additional stock management) including sortation technology and security, and systems integration (efficient links between invoicing and payment systems). In addition it is suggested that the scope should now be extended to include other beneficial areas including the provision of e-services, lending of e-books and e-reader hardware and other digital provision, as well as new methods of marketing the library service including social networking. Other areas have been considered in the past e.g. supplier selection, evidence-based stock management, "sales" analysis, and the new UKSLC subject scheme. These may also be included in the scope of the new scheme.

The T&F WG may include other areas and develop a wider scope or they could even come up with two schemes, one for the print supply chain in libraries and one for digital. The T&F WG will review these options and recommend the appropriate scope to the BIC Library Committee for their approval.

The financial impact of this project will be a small overhead for BIC in administration, room bookings, consultants fees etc. The current accreditation scheme involves quarterly meetings by conference call to approve applications for accreditation. The current scheme also involves designing questionnaires and issuing accreditation certificates. Details are on the BIC website.

The main dependency is the BIC Library Committee's instruction to proceed with this work within the appropriate scope. There is also the need to get the right people to attend the working group. These need to have experience of:

- Working in/managing libraries (including public and academic libraries)
- Library stock supply
- Library systems provision including LMS, RFID and relevant accounting systems
- Experience of procurement of services e.g. tendering
- Experience of accreditation schemes
- Involvement in consortia
- Knowledge of BIC and the library supply chain
- Knowledge of local authority management processes and decision making
- Knowledge of academic institutions' management process and decision making

It is assumed that ongoing management of the scheme after the T&F WG has finished will be undertaken by BIC through a qualified accreditation panel.

3.3. OUTLINE PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND/OR DESIRED OUTCOMES

The deliverables are:

1) A report offering an overview of an accreditation scheme which is measurable, understandable and attractive to libraries and which encourages libraries to invest in the technologies and processes recommended by BIC, which then deliver cost reductions and improvements in services. A successful scheme would accredit those libraries (both public

and academic), which are capable of receiving the accreditation and set targets for those not yet at the right standard. The report should also cover an accreditation scheme for all the other organisations involved in the library supply chain including stock suppliers, systems and service providers and data aggregators.

2) A clear statement of the benefits which will accrue to libraries and other organisations from achieving accreditation. This could be illustrated by case studies showing how existing accreditees have benefited.

3) The Project Report should include a description of the new accreditation scheme, the process that has been gone through, discarded options, reasoning behind the new scheme, the new scheme scope, scoring mechanism, criteria and methodology used and the advantages of the new scheme over the old. Where possible, the report should detail the type of savings which could be made by a library service implementing BIC's advice and so attaining accreditation.

4) A Comprehensive user guide for those wishing to apply for accreditation under this scheme – detailed guidance on the criteria that is being measured, how it is measured, and information on weightings where appropriate/used. The expectations, measures and criteria for success of the scheme should be transparent

5) Questionnaires as appropriate for certain organisations (as decided by the T&F WG)

6) Terms of Reference for the Accreditation Panel

7) A publicly available schedule of the accreditation cycle

8) An agreed start date for when the New Accreditation scheme will begin and a communications plan to support this

9) Marketing plan for the launch of the new scheme including a plan detailing how the key benefits of the scheme will be communicated to the organisations concerned

10) Monthly progress updates to the BIC Library Committee Chair and BIC's Executive Director.

11) New scheme logo

12) New Scheme certificates

3.4. CONSTRAINTS

Constraints include:

- the scope set/agreed by the BIC Library Committee
- the need to get the right membership of the working group
- BIC costs
- the need to be transparent v confidentiality
- finding a solution which works
- possible low level of interest amongst libraries for accreditation

- the new scheme will need to be promoted widely and this may incur costs.

3.5. INTERNAL & EXTERNAL INTERFACES

There is an interface between the T&FWG and the BIC Library Committee and between the T&FWG and the current e4libraries accreditation panel (which currently meets quarterly to accredit any applications received in the previous quarter).

The BIC Library Committee will review this briefing document and sign it off before it is made public to the wider BIC membership. The project will then report to the BIC Library Committee.

Once the project work is done the scheme itself will need promotion by the BIC TEC Committee. Other organisations which could help to promote the new scheme could include NAG, CILIP, SCL so there could be interfaces with these organisations during the work of the T&F WG to enlist their support.

4. OUTLINE BUSINESS/INDUSTRY CASE

There is no formal business case for the existing scheme. The justification for it is that BIC exists to encourage its members and its industry to implement beneficial technologies, processes, standards etc. An accreditation scheme enables BIC to promote this goal and to publicise organisations who respond and invest in systems and solutions. The scheme should be a useful measure of the sector's response to BIC's advice and it rewards those who follow this advice by giving them an accreditation which they can announce to their stakeholders. All of this activity is believed to be beneficial to the organisations involved. The end result should be that libraries save money and improve services.

One example given by Havering Borough was that the cost of acquisition of books declined from £5.46 per book purchased to 62p. This was achieved through implementing full cycle EDI, one of the key requirements in the e4libraries project. At the same time libraries have reported improved approval ratings. Similar case studies showed savings of £100,000+ as authorities implemented EDI, RFID and other technologies. See case studies on the BIC website: Staffordshire, Leeds and UCLAN <http://www.bic.org.uk/e4libraries/12/CASE-STUDIES/>
The savings which accrue to libraries and other organisations,

The project could be used in relation to The Arts Council and could show how responsive BIC is to the needs of the library sector. Developing an improved scheme which increases the number of accreditations would maximise the benefit of BIC's work in the library sector over the last few years.

5. QUALITY EXPECTATIONS

The work envisaged by this T&F WG will be very challenging. Accreditation schemes are not easy to design in complex industries and to be successful they need to be robust and measurable and ideally empirical. It will be up to the BIC Library Committee to accept the findings of the T&F WG and approve its recommendations.

6. ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

The scheme needs to test all the relevant areas, for all the appropriate types of organisations. It needs to deliver a measurable set of criteria and a convincing judging methodology so that applicants know what they have to do to succeed (but not so that they cheat!) and the scheme needs to be promotable widely around the library sector and to increase the number of applicants and accredited organisations.

7. RISKS

The risks of not doing this review include low take up of accreditation, and poor reputation of BIC in libraries by looking out of date. BIC needs to be seen to be doing up to date things that are beneficial for libraries and related organisations.

8. OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN

The T&F WG will produce a detailed project plan within 2 months of their first meeting. The suggestion is that the T&F WG should meet monthly for up to six months and a suggested target delivery date is end December 2013.

9. BUDGET/COSTS

The BIC costs of this project are likely to be as follows:

Room bookings at CILIP x 6 (*first meeting targeted for July*)

Simon Edwards: pro-rata allocation of consultancy retainer fees

Designer fees: for design of logo and certificate (this can be estimated by BIC).

BIC Library Committee: pro-rata allocation of Mick Fortune (Deputy Chair of BIC Library Committee) consultancy fees for contribution towards sign off of this T&F WG briefing document. This document will need to be finalized and signed off by the BIC Library Committee (ideally in one meeting) to initiate the project etc. The committee will also sign off on the T&FWG 's final report and to approve the launch of the new scheme, so there will also be the pro-rata allocation of consultancy costs for this.

No other costs are anticipated.

10. AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE

Karina Luke (Executive Director, BIC)

11. PROPOSED TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP LEADER/PROJECT MANAGER

The T&F WG Leader/Project Manager has not yet been decided. Simon Edwards could carry out this role if required. Alternatively it might be appropriate for a librarian or other BIC member to take on this role so that the scheme can be said to have been designed by users for users. BIC Library Committee will nominate a T&F WG Leader once volunteers have come forward.

Roles and responsibilities of the T&F WG leader are already specified in the BIC Library Committee Terms of Reference

12. CUSTOMERS AND USERS

Stakeholders include BIC, accredited libraries and other library organisations:

Ideally a minimum of:

- two library stock suppliers,
- one library system supplier,
- one RFID supplier
- one data aggregator
- two or more librarians preferably representing both public and academic libraries.

So far (May 2013) Catherine Cooke (Westminster Libraries) and Andrew Coburn (Essex Libraries) have agreed to join the working group.

It would be very helpful if the scheme were to be formally recognised by external organisations. These would include:

- NAG (National Acquisitions Group)
- CILIP (Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information professionals)
- SCL (Society of Chief Librarians)
- and possibly The Arts Council

BIC TEC Committee should be kept informed of work/progress from an early stage so that they are able to look at PR opportunities and to discuss the best way to promote the new scheme.

13. REPORTING

When a formal budget is produced then the T&F WG will be expected to report into the BIC Library Committee against budget on a monthly basis. This is a relatively small project with a specific aim and it should be possible to define the scheme and agree it within six months. The project leader will report to the BIC Library Committee and the consultant (if different) will report to the Executive Director via the consultants conference call or an ad hoc basis.

It is assumed that at the end of the project all the appropriate deliverables will be presented to and signed off by, the BIC Library Committee.