**New Forest National Park Authority**



**Invitation to Quote**

**Evaluation of Species Survival Fund project in the New Forest**

Date: Monday 3 February 2025

**Introduction**

The New Forest National Park Authority is seeking an experienced evaluation consultant to assess the value and effectiveness of our approach to delivering the Species Survival Fund (SSF) project in the New Forest National Park during 2025.

The [New Forest Species Survival Fund project](https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/protecting-nature/species-survival-project/) is a £1.3 million partnership project to deliver at least 250 hectares of nature enhancements across multiple sites that demonstrate increased abundance of key species and enhanced connectivity with the New Forest SSSI. The project started in April 2024 and is due to complete in February 2026.

We are delivering the project in partnership with:

* Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust
* Freshwater Habitats Trust
* Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
* New Forest Commoners Defence Association
* Wild New Forest.

The New Forest Species Survival Fund project is led by the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) which is responsible for conserving and enhancing the New Forest National Park and promoting understanding and enjoyment of the things that make it special. As well as planning, nature conservation and public engagement responsibilities, the services of the NPA include education, recreation, and archaeology.

The project is funded by the Government's Species Survival Fund. The fund was developed by Defra and its Arm's-Length Bodies. It is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

**Project summary**

The aim of our Species Survival Fund project is to drive a nature recovery network locally through increased connectivity of land within and beyond the boundaries of the National Park. This will allow priority species to expand and colonise new habitats, so whilst the work is not targeted to a shortlist of rare plants, animals, and fungi, we predict with confidence that they will colonise.

Funding for this project has been the catalyst for us to develop a new approach to working across whole landscape areas bringing in several taxonomic experts. To date sites have managed taxa in isolation which has led to clashes with the needs of other taxa, so our goal is to bring species into landscapes through multi-taxa approaches.

Our partnership combines the collective knowledge, expertise, and resources of our taxonomic experts to ensure the work maximises connectivity and colonisation and sets off a trophic cascade of increasing diversity and abundance across multiple taxonomic groups in the wider landscape. This approach enables us to share and develop our skills and knowledge and helps builds trust amongst partners. Optimum species interventions and targets are informed by the considerable long-term experience of partners as well as data modelling. Amongst the partnership funding is supporting 14 roles, 50 volunteers, and five interns to deliver capital works, ecological surveying, community and volunteer engagement, communications, and provide project support.

The complexity and highly fragmented nature of land ownership and management in the New Forest means there are many small landowners. Skilled and targeted land management interventions by knowledgeable and experienced staff are vital and continuity is essential when working with landowners. Across the project our partners are working with landowners on 25-30 sites to deliver interventions and solutions that fit alongside what landowners are already doing on their sites. This includes providing them with specialist expertise, advice, and technical guidance on how they can help improve the prospects of species by being more aware of management impacts on taxonomic groups. We’re also supporting ways for them to share their knowledge and experience with each other, so they are all better prepared and more able to help each other. Supporting clusters of landowners to work together means they are not on their own and can also help them develop their business models. We can also link them to the rest of the New Forest and the national picture.

Monitoring of changes in the level and distribution of key species during the project and for a further three years beyond the funded period will be carried out by Wild New Forest and Freshwater Habitats Trust. It does not form part of this contract.

**Overview of requirements**

We are seeking an evaluation consultant(s) / consultancy to assess the value and effectiveness of our approach to delivering conservation in the New Forest National Park through better understanding of the contributions of people and their networks in helping to build the resilience of landscapes.

This will need to include:

1. Baseline Data Collection – establish baseline data to measure the current expectations amongst landowners and staff involved in the project.
2. Impact Assessment – evaluate the value and effectiveness of our approach to delivering the project within a 12-month period from January to December 2025.
3. Innovative Techniques – utilise innovative evaluation methods to demonstrate the project’s impact, ensuring clear and compelling communication of results.

**Scope of work**

Your proposal should include your method, approach, and budget for delivering the following:

* Baseline Data Collection:
  + - Conduct initial surveys and assessments to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the work that will be carried out.
    - Engage with local landowners and staff to understand their perceptions, knowledge and expectations of the project.
* Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation:
  + - Implement regular monitoring activities to track changes and progress to understand the most appropriate research questions.
    - Use a mix of traditional and innovative techniques, such as digital storytelling, to capture data and illustrate impact.
* Final Evaluation Report:
  + - Compile and analyse data to produce a comprehensive evaluation report.
    - Highlight key findings, journey of lessons learned, recommendations for future projects, case studies of what’s worked.
    - Present the results in a visually engaging and accessible format, using infographics, interactive maps, and multimedia content.

**Indicative research questions**

The following questions are given as suggestions for the type of evaluation we are anticipating. In your proposal you should state which of these you would aim to focus on and how you propose interrogating these as part of your research.

* Process
  + - What has been the effort of people involved in the project – landowners, staff, volunteers?
    - Did we put in more effort or achieve more than we said we would at the start?
    - Have there been additional qualitative and quantitative benefits?
    - Are the interventions being implemented according to plans?
    - How satisfied are landowners / staff and what have we improved on?
* Impact
  + - What results have been produced?
    - Did the project produce or contribute to the intended outcomes and what unintended outcomes were produced?
    - What were the features of the project and context that made a difference?
    - What has and has not worked for whom in what circumstances?
    - How well did the project perform and was it worth it?
    - If there have been any barriers, what are they?
    - What has been the benefit of collaboration between all partners?
* Economic
  + - What is the breakdown of cost per site/ha/species in terms of capital vs. revenue vs. benefits?
    - Has the project been cost-effective, and does it represent value for money?
    - What has been the ratio of costs to benefits?
    - Is the project the best use of resources?
    - Were there any other contributions not included at the start, for example back-office costs?
    - Considering the skill set and job roles required for this type of project, has there been an increase in:
  + understanding and knowledge
  + skills and experience
  + identification of knowledge or skills gaps amongst the staff team delivering the project.

**Outputs/deliverables**

The following outputs will be required:

* + - Interim update in summer 2025.
    - A final written report presented to the NPA and partner organisations in early February 2026 to be shared with Defra and The National Lottery Heritage Fund on completion of the project as part of the terms and conditions of funding.
    - A set of research data, to be stored in a readily accessible electronic format such as Excel.

**The contract**

We are seeking a supplier with:

* + - experience of a wide range of local and national knowledge in evaluating externally funded projects
    - an understanding of the New Forest National Park or similar protected landscape
    - an understanding of the key issues associated conservation objectives and the complexity of land management needs.

Bids will be assessed using a price (30%), quality (70%) matrix.

**Budget**

Up to £20,000.

**Quote Process (what prospective suppliers should do):**

* + - Provide no more than six sides of A4 explaining their suitability, experience, and approach to the brief including timelines and methods of stakeholder engagement.
    - Provide CVs for relevant staff.
    - Include their proposed number of hours/days to achieve this work and the hourly/daily rate applicable.
    - Be prepared, if successful, to evidence Professional Indemnity Insurance of at least £50,000.

**Procurement Timeline**

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| **Stage** | **Date** |
| Invitation to Quote Released | 3 February 2025 |
| Deadline for responses | Noon, 21 February 2025 |
| Contract award | w/c 24 February 2025 |
| Inception meeting with key NPA and partner representatives | Shortly after contract award date |
| Interim update | 1 June 2025 |
| First draft report | 1 December 2025 |
| Final report | 1 February 2026 |

A copy of our Standard Conditions of Contract for Services can be found below:



All submissions can be made via

* our e-Procurement portal [In-tend](https://in-tendhost.co.uk/newforestnpa/aspx/Home)
* email to [tender@newforestnpa.gov.uk](mailto:tender@newforestnpa.gov.uk)
* post to NFNPA, Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Rd, Lymington SO41 9ZG

**All returns must be received by noon on 21 February 2025.**

Queries can be made via the In-tend portal or the tender email address above.