**Buying Specification**

**Background to Environment Agency**

We are an Executive Non-departmental Public Body responsible to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Our principal aims are to protect and improve the environment, and to promote sustainable development.

Further information on our responsibilities, Corporate Plan and how we are structured can be found on our website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency/about>

The Environment Agency is responsible for regulating a range of activities that affect the environment, people, and the economy – from large industries to small companies and individuals.

**Background to the specific work area relevant to this purchase**

The Environment Agency employs a significant number of regulatory officers across England to ensure activities are being undertaken in accordance with environmental law. The Environment Agency provides training for regulatory officers to ensure they are knowledgeable, competent and consistent ensuring timely and effective regulation. The biowaste treatment sector is one of many sectors we regulate and includes all regulatory aspects of biological treatment including aerobic biological treatment like composting and mechanical biological treatment (MBT).

**Requirement**

We have developed course material, *Aerobic Treatment of Waste* *(T593),* to enable our staff to increase their technical expertise, knowledge and to deliver competent, effective and consistent regulation of aerobic treatment waste activities.

We are seeking tender submissions for the delivery of the course to bring the content to life in a participatory way. There must be face-to-face delivery and online delivery options to allow for reasonable adjustment.

This course has previously been well received and feedback was very positive.

The course content will need to be reviewed from time to time and to include any relevant regulatory change. You will consider this in your submission.

Officers will have already completed an online course 'Introduction to biowaste treatment' which covers anaerobic and aerobic treatment (E162 content supplied on request). The introductory course outlines the basic principles of treatment processes, product specification and safety considerations. The introductory course is for our technical development framework (TDF) 1 – 2 (See section 5).

The Aerobic course is two days long. It should provide officers with a technical, in depth and challenging learning experience including case examples, problem solving, interpreting data and our regulatory approach. This takes officers to the next technical development stage of their career TDF level 3, which will allow them to be a more autonomous regulator.

The provider needs to demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the biowaste sector and provide evidence of working with operators or stakeholders understanding the challenges posed by and for this sector. They must have a track record of training delivery.

* Each course is two days long.
* We will require two face-to-face courses for the Aerobic Treatment training i.e. two deliveries for the course (per year); however, we would like to also consider proposals which involve an additional virtual delivery of the course.
* Online courses are conducted by Microsoft Teams (where relevant). The supplier must have relevant permissions in place.
* The contract will run for three years, with the option to extend by one year. Cost estimates will include any review, maintenance and development of the course.
* The contractor must be able to collect and collate feedback to the EA about the courses and attendance or completion for delegates.
* Venues will be arranged by the Environment Agency, but the contractor will need to provide a cost for expenses and travel. Most courses will be run in a central England location.
* At the end of the course, officers should be confident in their knowledge to perform effectively, consistently, and safely. This is assessed by feedback.
* The Contractor shall employ sufficient staff to ensure that the services are provided at all times and in all respects to the Project Standard. It is important that the Contractor is able to demonstrate that there is a sufficient reserve of staff available to ensure project delivery in the event of staff holidays, sickness or voluntary absence.
* The Environment Agency will need to be notified immediately of any changes to personnel associated with the project. The Contractor will ensure that every effort is made to replace outgoing staff with personnel of equal calibre and expertise. All new members of staff undertaking work for the Project will need to be agreed by the Environment Agency prior to commencement.

**T593 Aerobic Treatment of Waste**

Course material will be provided to the contractor for ‘Aerobic Treatment of Waste’. Officers must be or will be regulating sites which operate open and closed composting facilities and any other aerobic treatment. They should have a basic to intermediate level of understanding aerobic treatment activities. This course supports officer progression towards TDF 2 – 3 in Biowaste Treatment.

This should be a 2 – day classroom course. We prefer to offer this course twice a year. With additional 2 – day virtual course (with follow up session). We require a contract commitment for three years with an option to extend by a year. In total our preference is for 3 courses per year (2 face-to-face and one virtual).

The tender must include delivery of the course, with or without further development and contextualisation of available course material.

Outline presentation material is prepared but there is scope to include a proposal to further develop, enhance, amend and contextualise the content to suit both presenter and student. The course material and case study examples can be provided on request.

We are interested on submission that may be able to expand or add value to our current course and further development can be considered to add value and technical ability.

The course should be pitched at a competency level of TDF 2 – 3. This means the audience will have completed introductory training in the topic and will have spent at least 6 months shadowing more experience regulatory officers who lead on regulating aerobic treatment sites. The delegates will be both area regulatory staff and permitting staff. Course content must be sufficiently technical to enable the learner at the end of the course to feel confident to understand the process, interpret data and inspect compliance at an aerobic treatment facility.

The course should include sufficient time to allow the learner to apply what has been delivered during the presentations, ask questions and discuss ideas using a case study approach. Case study material is to be interactive and developed by the provider and to allow sufficient opportunity to test the understanding of the learner.

Course material currently covers the following topics – these must be included within any amended proposals:

* Aerobic treatments – Strategic Overview – drivers in the compost market and wider role.
* Biochemistry of aerobic treatment – critical process monitoring parameters
* Process control – monitoring, consequences of poor control, identification of problem scenarios
* Aerobic treatment technologies – in-vessel (closed systems), open windrow, thermophilic aerobic digestion
* Feedstock management – problem scenarios, examples of failures, root cause failures, importance of good design and feedstock control
* Site and plant design – plant & equipment design and use in accordance with BAT/appropriate measures
* Output storage, treatment & use
* Troubleshooting

Direct experience of working in sectors involved with aerobic treatments of waste would be desirable to enhance the knowledge sharing with our officers. The course should provide opportunity for delegates to work though examples and deliver feedback. There should be opportunity for discussion and questioning.

The course content should also consider the need to think about an operator’s perspective as well as regulatory perspectives

The tender submission should include a detailed explanation of how the contractor will meet the course objectives above using the existing course materials or any amendments they may need to propose. Furthermore, the contractor must consider any cost of updating material (such as regulatory changes). The contractor would need to cost any further development clearly and any other developments in the tender. The Agency will own the intellectual property rights to the final course content.

Officers must have completed and passed E162 prior to booking this course.

Course material is owned by the Environment Agency.

By the end of the course delegates will be able to understand/describe:

* Aerobic treatment (composting and MBT) – Strategic Overview
* Biochemistry of aerobic treatment
* Feedstock management – problem scenarios, examples of failures, root cause of failures, importance of good design and feedstock control
* Critical process monitoring parameters
* Process control –interpretation of monitoring and consequences of poor control, identification of instability
* Aerobic treatment technologies – Composting, MBT and thermophilic aerobic digestion (TAD)
* Plant design – plant & equipment design and installation in accordance with BAT/appropriate measures
* Compost storage, treatment & use
* Troubleshooting
* Deliver competent and thorough technical regulatory assessments.

**Other points to note**

At all times, the Contractor shall only employ in the execution and superintendence of the Contract persons who are suitable and appropriately skilled and experienced. The Environment Agency may request recent and relevant references prior to the award of the project.

Please detail your Course Delivery costs.

Please ensure the prices you quote are inclusive of ALL costs payable to deliver a course.

For the avoidance of doubt this should include:

* Costs for development and maintenance of/minor updates to material
* All travel & subsistence costs
* Equipment hire/use e.g. for practical exercises
* Pre/post course work/evaluation and
* Associated contract admin/management costs.

**Intellectual property rights**

All results, including material and tools produced, developed, or paid for under this contract shall be the property of the Environment Agency.

**Sustainability**

The Environment Agency protects and improves the environment and is committed to reducing the sustainability impacts of its activities directly and through its supply chains. We expect the Contractor to share this commitment and adopt a sound, proactive sustainable approach in keeping with the 25-year environmental plan/our commitments compliant with all applicable legislation. This includes understanding and reducing direct and indirect sustainability impacts and realising opportunities, including but not restricted to; resilience to climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, water use and quality, biosecurity, resource efficiency and waste, reducing the risk of pollution, biodiversity, modern slavery and equality, diversity & inclusion, negative community impacts.

As a delivery partner, the successful contractor is expected to pursue sustainability in their operations, thereby ensuring the Contracting Authority is not contracting with a supplier whose operational outputs run contrary to the Contracting Authority’s objectives. The successful contractor will need to approach the project with a focus on the entire life cycle of the project.

**Administrative points**

Course administration (including dates and joining instructions) will be undertaken by SSCL at the Environment Agency. The successful contractor must work closely with the Environment Agency.

Wherever possible classroom sessions will be held at EA venues. If you are able to offer your own centrally located venue i.e. not a third-party venue, you should give details including any associated costs. EA venues will usually include a projector and screen. However, the Contractor must be able to provide their own projector and screen if required. The Contractor must also provide all other necessary equipment to meet the course objectives. The contractor must ensure that all equipment meets relevant Health & Safety standards. Where the Contractor’s portable electrical equipment is used the EA may request evidence that the equipment has been PAT tested.

The tender response must outline how they will effectively deliver virtual or hybrid options. They will also demonstrate that they will consider and accommodate special requirements of delegates.

**Paper use**

All documents and reports prepared by consultants and contractors are produced wherever possible on recycled paper containing at least 100% post-consumer waste and printed double sided.

**Travel**

use of public transport, reduce face to face meetings by using email and videoconferencing. Meetings to be held in locations to minimise travel and close to public transport links.

**Diversity and Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity in all we do and valuing the diversity of our workforce, customers and communities. As a public body, we publish regular information about what our equality objectives are and how we’re meeting them.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency/about/equality-and-diversity>

**Outputs and Contract Management**

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| Reference | Deliverable | Responsible Party | Date of completion |
| 1 | W/C xx/xx/2024 start up meeting with the project officer and supplier | Environment Agency | xx |
| 2 | Weekly telecom thereafter to resolve issues or delivery questions. | Supplier | First month until no longer required |
| 3 | Telecoms to highlight and feedback delivery issues or unresolved issues raised. | Supplier | As required throughout contract |
| 4 | Delivery of both courses on at least two occasions. | Supplier | Reviewed at 12 months and thereafter until the end of contract. |

**Copyright and confidentiality**

Unless otherwise indicated, the copyright in all the documentation belongs to the Environment Agency, and the documentation is to be returned to us with your tender. The contents of the documentation must be held in confidence by you and not disclosed to any third party other than is strictly necessary for the purposes of submitting your quote. You must also ensure that a similar obligation of confidentiality is placed upon any third party to whom you may need to disclose any of the documentation for the purposes of the tender.