**Question:** Is your post open to individuals?

**Response:** Yes, individual artists/creative practitioners can apply, though artists who are also registered as some form of recognised organisational form, such as a business, are also welcome to apply.

**Question:** How should I proceed for the start date of 15 July 2024?

**Response:** Please see the attachments in the information section in the opportunity notice: Arts as evidence - Contracts Finder. The request for quotation provides details on what is expected and how to apply. Please also note the separate form for the commercial response and the section where clarifications to bidders questions are placed. The response to this question will also be published there anonymously.

**Question:** Would you be interested in, or might you award, a contract for more than one of the four collaborations, as opposed to four contracts for four separate artists?

**Response:** No, I’m afraid not. We are seeking to collaborate directly with individual artists and not work through an intermediary organisation, because of the nature of the project.

**Question:** Are you open to proposals to work with children and young people to collaborate with and create the artworks, as opposed to professional artists alone? I accept that this might need a different structure for collaborating with the NE teams, which we would happily manage.

**Response:** No, because this is not appropriate for this project. The purpose of this project is to build on the experiences of artists/creative practitioners who have worked in arts-science collaborations before.

**Question:** If we need to conduct fieldwork as part of the project is their flexibility over the Natural England sites we work with?

**Response:** This will be something the awarded artist/creative practitioner will need to discuss with the CSD team they are working with.

**Question:** Am I correct in thinking Natural England collaborated with London Development Trust to conduct research about the role of arts research in policy? If so is that report available to the public?

**Response:** Yes, you are correct. The report was always for internal use only and research participation was consented to on that basis. However, we will discuss some of the overall findings with the awarded artists/creative practitioners in the first workshop.

**Question:** One of the deliverables is creation of artwork - where will this be displayed or disseminated and when?

**Response:** This depends on the nature of the artwork/piece produced, given the opportunity is open to a full range of artists/creative practitioners, including musicians and performance artists) and will be part of the discussion the CSD team will have with the artist they are working with. It is likely to vary by collaboration, but we can also consider together the possibility of some sort of joint ‘show’, if appropriate and feasible.

**Question:** Each of the four research projects look very exciting! Is it helpful to know who the principal investigators and researchers are?

**Response:** Each CSD team has one or two members of staff who have developed the outlines for their respective collaborations and who will be working with the artist/creative practitioner. I am afraid it is not usual to provide the names of who contractors will be working with beyond the overall project lead (named on Contract Finder).

**Question:** In the ‘approach to briefs’ section am I correct in thinking we need to draft a response based on our first choice brief e.g. climate change but we might be assigned the DNA brief?

**Response:** Yes, that is correct, though we will try and take account of the preference of the awarded artists/creative practitioners in the way outlined in the Request for Quotation: “All potential bidders have been asked to rank the 4 arts-science collaborations by preference. The top scoring supplier will be awarded their first choice. The second highest scoring supplier will be awarded their top choice of the remaining 3 options. The third highest scoring supplier will be awarded their preferred choice from the remaining 2 options. The fourth highest scoring supplier will be offered the final option that remains. Should any of the 4 successful bidders reject the awarded project NE will not be able to offer an alternative project; the project will then be awarded to the highest scoring unsuccessful bidder.”We understand that some applicants/bidders may have particular knowledge in one of the brief areas, but I am afraid because of the bidding and evaluation process we have to abide by for this contract, we can only take account of the stated preferences of the top 4 scoring artists/creative practitioners as outlined above and in the Request for Quotation.

**Question:** Does “economically advantageous” mean someone who budgets 9k will automatically score higher than someone who budgets 12k even if the budget is well rationalised and fairly costed?

**Response:** The applicant/bidder who quotes less will score higher on the commercial part of the evaluation, which counts as 30% of the scoring and is calculated in the way outlined in the Request for Quotation. However, they will not automatically score higher overall than someone whose quote is £12k. The evaluation for this tender is weighted towards the technical evaluation criteria (70%) and therefore the size of the difference in the commercial quote will have a bigger impact where the technical scores are more similar. However, it is important to note that an artist/creative practitioner who scores well on both the technical and commercial scores will score well overall. (Please also note that the expectation for number of days is at least 35 days.)

**Question:** Can we share our response to the technical questions in our own format providing it is in line with the criteria (pt 11, half side A4 etc)?

**Response:** Yes – but please note that each question should be provided in a separate document as they are considered separately.

**Question:** Should the response document be a PDF?

**Response:** Please provide in Word because sometimes commercial information is supplied inadvertently in other sections and this needs to be redacted before sharing with the evaluators. However, for all bidders, please try to remember not to include any commercial information anywhere else than in the separate Commercial Response form supplied in the opportunity notice on Contracts Finder.

**Question:** Do we need to supply a portfolio?

**Response:** No, we would prefer links to be provided in the appropriate technical responses (unless this is impossible).

**Question:** Or is the best way to include images / case studies of previous work within the body of the technical response document?

**Response:** Yes, but please note the expectation that there will be a number of technical response documents (one for each question) – and a limit to the length of response for each question.

**Question:** I would be pleased to learn if Natural England is supplying the client side services?

**Response:** [It is an expectation of this contract that interested artists/creative practitioners will collaborate directly with Natural England (please see Request for Quotation for details). We are not seeking an intermediary to facilitate the collaboration.](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gs-ca.com%2Fclient-advice-services.html&data=05%7C02%7CAlexia.Coke%40naturalengland.org.uk%7C40b7833a9f4b436df12308dc7ef5e1bd%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638524841895371624%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Lzf894iXm3uSwaK%2FDat9YkOnv5kEEKt2KkNtXFVNZhY%3D&reserved=0)

**Question:** I'd be very grateful if you can send any information on how I could put in an application for consideration. Is this possible as an individual artist?

**Response:** Yes, this call is for individual artists. Please see the document ‘Request for Quotation’ (RFQ) in the ‘more information’ section half way down the page for this opportunity in the Contracts Finder here: [Arts-science collaborations - Contracts Finder](https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/notice/847be479-e1c3-40cf-82ae-1abb589bc35b?origin=SearchResults&p=1) for details of what is involved and how to apply. Please see the section on the ‘Evaluation Methodology’ within the RFQ for the evaluation questions you should address in your bid and the format (number of pages, etc) expected.

**Question:** Can I apply if I am based in Scotland?

**Response:** We will accept applications from across the UK (just be aware that there is a potential expectation for travel to one of more places in England and to factor this into your quote as outlined in the RFQ).

**Question:** Is there a specific format or template for which to return each response submission?

**Response:** There is no specific template or format for the written response, only for the Commercial Response. However, please use Word or an equivalent when writing your responses.

**Question:** The RFQ guidance states that there should be a separate response submission for each technical question. Does this mean a separate *document* for each question?

**Response:** Yes, we do expect a separate (Word equivalent, not pdf) document for each question as these are looked at separately.

**Question:** How should the Commercial Response be completed?

**Response:** Please use the tasks outlined in the box after the section ‘other project outputs’ in the Request for Quotation to itemise costs.

**Question:** What would be the correct way of indicating that I am not VAT-registered?

**Response:** You can indicate that you are not VAT-registered in the ‘response’ cell to Annex 1.1(f). Please could you also confirm here if this means you will not be charging VAT.

**Question:** Is this likely a one-off project/proposal or is another calling likely to happen in the future?

**Response:** We don’t know. It is likely to be the only call from this social science pot, but my hope is that this project may inspire other parts of the Chief Scientist’s Directorate to consider arts-science research-related collaborations in future, if this project is able to showcase some of the value of such collaborations. However, this will depend on NE evidence priorities in future.

**Question:** Can I apply as an individual artist, and if so how?

**Response:** Yes, this call is for individual artists. Please see the document ‘Request for Quotation’ (RFQ) in the ‘more information’ section half way down the page for this opportunity in the Contracts Finder here: [Arts-science collaborations - Contracts Finder](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk%2Fnotice%2F847be479-e1c3-40cf-82ae-1abb589bc35b%3Forigin%3DSearchResults%26p%3D1&data=05%7C02%7Calexia.coke%40naturalengland.org.uk%7C69ea0c285c6446a5de1408dc800e351e%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638526045777536714%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2FjBYwuYoZVfGBK%2BIUBYpoGxqBm8xdJx5OQY1nuc73i8%3D&reserved=0) for details of what is involved and how to apply. Please see the section on the ‘Evaluation Methodology’ within the RFQ for the evaluation questions you should address in your bid and the format (number of pages, etc) expected.

Please note that separate submissions (meaning a separate word document) for each technical question should be provided and that tenderers should provide answers that meet the criteria of each technical question outlined there. There is also a separate template that should be filled in for the quote called ‘commercial response template’ that is also available to download in the ‘more information’ section of the opportunity notice.

**Question:** Can we make one application as 'an artist' if there are two of us?

**Response:** Yes.

**Question:** Would it be possible to apply as a duo and will our application be considered if so?

**Response:** Yes, it is possible to apply as a duo.

Please note that this is a research project that is about the role of the arts in multidisciplinary evidence processes, not simply science communications (particularly within the context of nature recovery), so please make clear how your work will add value within this framework.

**Question:** Can the response to the technical question include images?

**Response:** Yes, it can include images, but there will probably be a limit to number because of file size (see below)**.**

**Question:** Can it be submitted as a PDF?

**Response:** Please do not submit it as a pdf, however, but as a word or equivalent document. So you will need to be careful about the size of the documents to ensure it can be sent and received. I understand Microsoft Outlook can accept attachments of up to 25 MB in size. All documents should be sent in the one email.

**Question:** When attaching the CV shall we create a joint CV or one each?

**Response:** One each is fine.

**Question:** In Q1.1 it states to 'illustrate the depth of your experience through explaining..... relation to evidence processes'. Could you please explain more what this means?

**Response:** This question is about how your experience relates to science (including social science) research and evidence processes (planning and conducting research, analysing findings, communicating and using findings, etc). It is for you to explain how this relates to your work through your response to this question.

**Question:** 'Explaining what the nature/ environment art-science collaborations you have worked with involve'. Can this be visual art projects or do we need to include research we have done?

**Response:** What we want here is to understand what arts-science collaborations you have done and what you have done within them. If this has included research then please do include an outline of what this involved as part of that.

**Question:** With regards to formatting, we have created a separate document for all our written answers. Is this acceptable?

**Response:** Please ensure that your written answers are each in a separate document as outlined in the RFQ. This is because the responses to each answer are assessed separately.

**Question:** In terms of addressing our preferred brief, are we expected to research the topics with reference to studies/ papers, workshops etc using arts based research techniques to collate/ analyse/ interpret qualitative data? and then also deliver an art piece as well, no matter which topic we may work on?

**Response:** We would like to know how you would approach your preferred brief, to provide an example of how you are likely to approach arts-science collaboration in order to deliver an artistic output (and an indication of what might be the kind of thing you might deliver for that brief).  However, there is not a guarantee that you would end up working on your preferred brief and you would need to work with the team to define the output anyway. Whichever the project, it will involve working with the particular science team to decide what you will produce in as collaborative a way as feasible, doing any research needed and delivering an output. There isn’t expectation that the sample brief here will require lots of research.

**Question:** Are we expected to fill out and send the 'commercial response template' and 'standard contract for goods and servicing order form' as well? From what we can tell, we just submit answers to all questions in the RFQ attachment?

**Response:** You must also submit the commercial response as this is your quote. The standard contract for goods and services is just for your information and will be filled in once the winning bids have been awarded and accepted. You only need to fill in the two annexes in the RFQ (perhaps copy this over into a word document or delete the rest of the RFQ). Please put your response to each technical question in a separate word (or equivalent) report to facilitate this to be assessed separately.

**Question:** 'Please ensure you factor these costs into your bids' - regarding the available budget, do we detail this and attach within the RFQ document?

**Response:** Please include your quote with costs in the commercial response template. Please do not include any budget or cost anywhere else.

**Question:** Can you clarify if the forms attached below are ALL of the required forms? (The forms attached were the Request for Quotation, the Commercial Response and the Order Form.)

**Response:**

The only parts of the Request for Quotation we need you to fill in are Annex 1 and Annex 2 so please copy those annexes into a Word document (or delete the rest of the document) when you submit that, having filled those annexes in. The rest of the document provides a description of what we are seeking, the application process and expectations, including the evaluation criteria for this tender.

Please note that the main part of how we will evaluate the bids we receive will be your responses to the ‘technical’ questions in the third box in the Evaluation Citeria section. Please submit a separate written response in Word or equivalent to each of these questions in a separate Word or equivalent document for each question. The information in the boxes within each question outlines the criteria for evaluating responses and our expectations in terms of how many pages for each question and what font and size to use. There is no separate template provided for this.

The Project Order is for your information. We do not expect you to fill this in. We will complete this with the winning bidder.

So what we expect in terms of attachments when you email your submission is:

* The completed Commercial Response template with your quote  is where you put your quote
* Your separate responses to each of the six technical evaluation questions (in separate Word or equivalent documents; please do not use pdf)
* Completed versions of the two annexes in the Request for Quotation
* A CV.

**Question:** Can you confirm if you are able to offer guidance on completing these forms either in person, on the phone or via email as some of the criteria seem slightly unclear?

**Response:** I am afraid we are not able to provide guidance in person or on the phone, but you are able to ask questions of clarification by email until a set date. For this contract it is today (4/6/24). I am then required to share the questions and responses anonymously on the Q&A form on Contracts Finder.

**I am experiencing problems receiving some external emails. Therefore when sending your applications to me --** [**Alexia.Coke@naturalengland.org.uk**](mailto:Alexia.Coke@naturalengland.org.uk) **– please could you also copy** [**socialscience@naturalengland.org.uk**](mailto:socialscience@naturalengland.org.uk)**. Thank you.**