**AHDB TEMPLATE**

**REQUEST FOR QUOTE (RFQ)**

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| **Contract Title:** | **Cereals and Oilseeds Farm and Trade Assurance processes - an independent study into how assurance works and why supply chains require it.** |
| **Contract Reference:** | **2023-672** Cereals Assurance Evidence Gathering Submission |
| **Contract period:** | **April 1 – July 31 2024** |
| **Date:** | **31/01/2024** |

1. **Introduction**

This document is an invitation to quote for the services mentioned within this document. Submissions should be based on the information contained within this document and in the format outlined in section 4. Deadlines and submission instructions are contained in section 6.

1. **Background / Aims**

There is a clear lack of accessible facts and insight for grower levy payers into what is required beyond the farmgate and of imported grain. The current situation presents a material risk to farm level support for farm assurance.

As such, AHDB have been asked by industry partners to commission an independent exercise into gathering evidence on exactly how assurance processes work for domestic and imported grain and why they are needed through the supply chain.

The work will have an evidence-based foundation, with a fully independent and impartial conclusion that will be respected by the industry.

The purpose of this work is to ensure that as an industry we have independent evidence of how domestic and imported assurance processes are applied and why they are needed by primary processors. The outcome we are aiming for is to create a clear evidence base for industry collaboration on the matter of how assurance standards are applied.

1. **Service Requirement**

There are four clear outcomes for this piece of work:

1. Collect data/evidence from primary processors in the key crop segments on regulatory and contractual needs from raw material assurance.
   1. Comprehensive review of both farm and trade/import assurance methodologies, ensuring clarity on which aspects of each scheme are required at which point in the supply chain.
   2. Formal interviews/evidence gathering processes to ensure that all data/evidence is factual.
   3. Desk-review of all relevant farm and trade assurance schemes in detail so that all supply chain feedback can be corroborated against evidence.
   4. Explore through interviews/data collection if there are any future potential further requirements from supply chains that need to be considered.
2. Create a map / flow diagram of farm and trade assurance schemes, how they interconnect and meet the needs of primary processors.
   1. Evidencing of real-world application of farm and trade assurance schemes and the points of testing, verification and auditing.
   2. Where possible, giving indicative costs for each part of assurance requirements evidence.
3. Using specific, agreed examples, demonstrate how the flow through farm and trade assurance schemes enables a primary processor to demonstrate compliance.
   1. Case-studies of how assurance schemes have offered the depth and detail that supply chains require for regulatory and contractual compliance.
4. Demonstrate how the logistical differences between domestic and imported supply chains impact how compliance is demonstrated, and risk (and liability) managed.
   1. Clear examples of the differences in compliance requirements between a 29t lorry delivery and a larger imported vessel.
   2. Clear explanation of the time/cost/detail required for trade assurance processes and comparison to farm assurance processes.

The conclusion of this work will be to produce a written report collating and communicating the assurance processes in detail.

Process:

Stage 1 – agreement on proposal, procure relevant data/evidence collection services.

Stage 2 – data/evidence collection by research agency (including key stakeholder interviews if appropriate), desk research & evidence gathering.

Stage 3 – review procured research/evidence, conduct analysis and draft report.

Stage 4 – agree conclusions alongside independent experts.

Stage 5 – complete final report/review results with stakeholders.

Review:

Due to the sensitivity of this work in the wider context of the industry. AHDB will employ an independent review process.

The review process will bring impartial knowledge and expertise to ensure that the evidence collated is representative of the current market and to advise on areas that are ambiguous. The review process can also advise and where appropriate make informed judgements on the future potential requirements of supply chains, based upon the research and evidence provided.

The review process will be achieved by appointing independent experts on specific areas of expertise (such as contract law, food and feed safety legislation, knowledge of farm and trade assurance schemes application) who will review and provide comment on the relevant sections of the report.

Budget:

The total costs are estimated to be £40,000 to fully cover all aspects as required.

1. **Structure / Format of Submission**

The proposal must clearly demonstrate how the research objectives listed above will be met.

The methodologies used to achieve the research objectives must clearly be identified in the proposal with clear demonstration of how the approach achieves the objectives.

Any research tools e.g. discussion guides, questionnaires etc. used by the successful tenderer must be approved by AHDB prior to any fieldwork taking place.

1. **Evaluation and Award of Contract**

Evaluation of tenders will be on the following basis:-

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|  | Weighting (100%) |
| Demonstrate a clear understanding of the brief and research objectives in the proposal. | 5% |
| Outline a clear approach, highlighting the methodology and/or approach for the analysis – clearly showing how they are relevant and link to achieving the research objectives. | 40% |
| Experience of project manager and supporting team in delivering similar projects in terms of methodology and focused on agriculture production systems. | 20% |
| An objective and well-structured proposal which clearly lays out the required information and includes a detailed breakdown of costs and a project plan with a timeline, identification of any risks/key dates. Contingency planning, including for staff absence/changes, sub-contracting issues | 10% |
| Demonstrate how a process for quality control will be followed for fieldwork and interpretation/presentation of findings. | 5% |
| Price:  To enable comparability of proposals, a breakdown of costs (by key activities) with fieldwork costs must be provided. | 20% |

1. **Tender submissions**

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| **Quotes must be received by Noon:** | **8 March 2024** |

Submission instructions:-

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| Email address: | [David.Eudall@ahdb.org.uk](mailto:David.Eudall@ahdb.org.uk) |
| Reference *(entered as the subject)*: | Cereals Assurance Evidence Gathering Submission |

Submissions will remain unopened until after the closing date and time has passed.

1. **Timetable**

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Deadline | | RFQ circulated | 14February 2024 | | Last date for suppliers to ask clarification questions  **(suppliers are required to register their interest with AHDB in order to receive clarification information)** | 01 March 2024 | | Deadline for receipt of submissions/quotes | 8 March 2024 | | Notification of intended award of contract | 22 March 2024 | | Contract commencement | 01 April 2024 | |

Please note these timescales are approximate and may change.

1. **Additional Information**

N/A

1. **Terms / Conditions of Participation**

AHDB Terms and Conditions for the supply of goods and services shall apply to any contract awarded as a result of this request for quote.

If you have any questions relating to this tender please contact:-

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| Email address: | [David.Eudall@ahdb.org.uk](mailto:David.Eudall@ahdb.org.uk) |
| Reference *(entered as the subject)*: | Cereals Assurance Evidence Gathering Question |