# Request for Quotation

# Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC: subtidal reef dive survey analysis and report writing

**January 2025**

Request for Quotation

**Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC: subtidal reef diver survey analysis and report writing**

You are invited to submit a quotation for the requirement described in the specification, Section 2.

Please confirm by email, receipt of these documents and whether you intend to submit a quote or not.

Your response should be returned to the following email addresses by:

Email: naturalenglanddiveunit@naturalengland.org.uk and lucy.may@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 10/02/2025

Time: 17:00

Ensure you include the name of the quotation and ‘Final Submission’ in the subject field to make it clear that it is your response.

**Contact Details and Timetable**

Lucy May will be your contact for any questions linked to the content of the quote or the process. Please submit any clarification questions via email and note that, unless commercially sensitive, both the question and the response will be circulated to all tenderers.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Action | Date |
| Date of issue of RFQ | 28-JAN-2025 at 09:00 |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 07-FEB-2025 at 17:00 |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 10-FEB-2025 at 17:00 |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 11-FEB-2025 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 11-FEB-2025 |
| Intended Delivery Date  | 31-MARCH-2025 |

**Section 1: General Information**

**Glossary**

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following words and expressions used within this Request for Quotation shall have the following meanings (to be interpreted in the singular or plural as the context requires):

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| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| “Authority” | means Natural England who is the Contracting Authority.  |
| “Contract” | means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier. |
| “Response” | means the information submitted by a supplier in response to the RFQ. |
| “RFQ” | means this Request for Quotation and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to suppliers. |

**Conditions applying to the RFQ**

You should examine your Response and related documents ensuring it is complete and in accordance with the stated instructions prior to submission.

Your Response must contain sufficient information to enable the Authority to evaluate it fairly and effectively. You should ensure that you have prepared your Response fully and accurately and that prices quoted are arithmetically correct for the units stated.

By submitting a Response, you, the supplier, are deemed to accept the terms and conditions provided in the RFQ. Confirmation of this is required in Annex 2.

Failure to comply with the instructions set out in the RFQ may result in the supplier’s exclusion from this quotation process.

**Acceptance of Quotations**

By issuing this RFQ the Authority does not bind itself to accept any quotation and reserves the right not to award a contract to any supplier who submits a quotation.

**Costs**

The Authority will not reimburse you for any costs and expenses which you incur preparing and submitting your quotation, even if the Authority amends or terminates the procurement process.

**Self-Declaration and Mandatory Requirements**

The RFQ includes a self-declaration response (Annex 1) which covers basic information about the supplier, as well as any grounds for exclusion. If you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated.

Any mandatory requirements will be set out in Section 2, Specification of Requirements and, if you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated.

**Clarifications**

Any request for clarification regarding the RFQ and supporting documentation must be submitted via email no later than the deadline for clarifications set out in the Timetable. The Authority shall be under no obligation to respond to queries raised after the clarification deadline.

The Authority will respond to all reasonable clarifications as soon as possible but cannot guarantee a minimum response time. The Authority will publish all clarifications and its responses to all suppliers via email unless deemed commercially sensitive.

If a supplier believes that a request for clarification is commercially sensitive, it should clearly state this when submitting the clarification request. However, if the Authority considers either that:

* the clarification and response are not commercially sensitive; and
* all suppliers may benefit from its disclosure,

then the Authority will notify the supplier (via email), and the supplier will have an opportunity to withdraw the request for clarification by sending a further message requesting the withdrawal of the clarification request. If not withdrawn by the supplier within 2 working days of the Authority’s notification, the Authority may publish the clarification request and its response to all suppliers and the Authority shall not be liable to the supplier for any consequences of such publication.

The Authority reserves the right to seek clarification of any aspect of a quotation and/or provide additional information during the evaluation phase to carry out a fair evaluation. Where the Authority seeks clarification on any aspect of the quotation, the supplier must respond within the timeframe requested by the Authority.

**Amendments**

The Authority may amend the RFQ at any time prior to the deadline for receipt. If it amends the RFQ the Authority will notify you via email.

Suppliers may modify their quotation prior to the deadline for Responses. No Responses may be modified after the deadline for Responses.

Suppliers may withdraw their quotations at any time by submitting a notice via the email to the named contact.

**Conditions of Contract**

The Authority’s Standard Good and Services Terms & Conditions (used for purchases under £50k) can be located on the [Natural England Website](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement) and will be applicable to any contract awarded as a result of this quotation process. The Authority will not accept any changes to these terms and conditions proposed by a supplier.

Suppliers should note that the quotation provided by the successful bidder will form part of the Contract.

**Prices**

Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, exclusive of VAT.

**Disclosure**

All Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement, including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice. For these purposes, the Authority may disclose within Government any details contained in your quotation. The information will not be disclosed outside Government during the procurement.

In addition, the Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which provide a public right of access to information held by public bodies. In accordance with these two statutes, the Authority may be required to disclose information contained in your quotation to any person who submits a request for information pursuant to those statutes.

Further to the Government’s transparency agenda, all UK Government organisations must advertise on Contract Finder in accordance with the following publication thresholds:

* Central Contracting Authority’s: £12,000
* Sub Central Contracting Authority’s and NHS Trusts: £30,000

For the purpose of this RFQ the Authority is classified as a Central Contracting Authority with a publication threshold of £12,000 inclusive of VAT.

If this opportunity is advertised via Contracts Finder, we are obliged to publish details of the awarded contract including who has won the contract, the contract value, and indicate whether the winning supplier is a small and medium-sized enterprise (“SMEs”) or voluntary organisation or charity. A copy of the contract must also be published with confidential information redacted.

By submitting a Response, you consent to these terms as part of the procurement.

**Disclaimers**

Whilst the information in this RFQ and any supporting information referred to herein or provided to you by the Authority have been prepared in good faith the Authority does not warrant that this information is comprehensive or that it has been independently verified.

The Authority does not:

* make any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFQ;
* accept any liability for the information contained in the RFQ or for the fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information; or
* accept any liability for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation or any other liability which cannot lawfully be excluded) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

Any supplier considering entering into contractual relationships with the Authority following receipt of the RFQ should make its own investigations and independent assessment of the Authority and its requirements for the goods and/or services and should seek its own professional financial and legal advice.

**Information Security requirements**

The Government Security Classification Policy (GSCP) sets out the administrative system used by HM Government (HMG) to protect information and data assets appropriately against prevalent threats through the use of ‘classification tiers’. HMG uses three classification tiers; OFFICIAL, SECRET and TOP SECRET. Each tier provides a set of recommended baseline behaviours and a set of protective controls, which are proportionate to the threat profile for that tier AND the potential impact of a compromise, accidental loss or incorrect disclosure of information held within that tier.

Tenderers and suppliers must ensure that appropriate protective security controls are in place to comply with the GSCP and manage the information shared and received as part of this tender exercise.

A full suite of guidance documents is available on GOV.UK, with specific guidance for tenderers and suppliers set out in [Guidance 1.6 - Contractors and Contracting Authorities.docx (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1166155/Guidance_1.6_-_Contractors_and_Contracting_Authorities.pdf).

**Use of Artificial Intelligence**

The Authority expects suppliers to declare where they have used AI software in the creation of Tender responses or intend to use AI software in the performance of the contract. How any AI software was, or will be, used should be to be declared within the technical submission part of the tender. We may require you to answer specific question/s on this topic, particularly where the Authority expects that usage is highly likely or clearly relates to the contract requirements.

Suppliers must follow any guidelines or regulations related to AI use and declarations as indicated in the [PPN 2/24 Improving Transparency of AI use in Procurement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-0224-improving-transparency-of-ai-use-in-procurement/ppn-0224-improving-transparency-of-ai-use-in-procurement-html).

Any information, instructions, or data provided by the Authority to suppliers as part of this tender, the requirements, or contract should not be directly inserted into Generative AI software (such as Gemini, ChatGPT, or CoPilot) without prior permission, unless this information is clearly published in the public domain.

Use of any Authority confidential tender information for training AI software is prohibited. it is advised that Defra’s data or instructions, or anything marked as confidential should not be directly inserted into AIs. For example, putting Authority’s instruction email into Gemini, ChatGPT, or CoPilot is not recommended.

If you intend to use AI to provide goods or services to the Authority, then you are required to complete a declaration which is simply answering the question stated within the 'Information to be returned’. The answer to this question will not be used in scoring your quote.

**Protection of Personal Data**

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 the supplier must agree to the following:

* You must only process any personal data in strict accordance with instructions from the Authority.
* You must ensure that all the personal data that we disclose to you or you collect on our behalf under this agreement are kept confidential.
* You must take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees who have access to personal data.
* Only employees who may be required to assist in meeting the obligations under this agreement may have access to the personal data.
* Any disclosure of personal data must be made in confidence and extend only so far as that which is specifically necessary for the purposes of this agreement.
* You must ensure that there are appropriate security measures in place to safeguard against any unauthorised access or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage or disclosure of the personal data.
* On termination of this agreement, for whatever reason, the personal data must be returned to us promptly and safely, together with all copies in your possession or control.

**General Data Protection Regulations 2018**

For the purposes of the Regulations the Authority is the data processor.

The personal information that we have asked you provide on individuals (data subjects) that will be working for you on this contract will be used in compiling the tender list and in assessing your offer. If you are unsuccessful the information will be held and destroyed within two years of the award of contracts. If you are awarded a contract it will be retained for the duration of the contract and destroyed within seven years of the contract’s expiry.

We may monitor the performance of the individuals during the execution of the contract, and the results of our monitoring, together with the information that you have provided, will be used in determining what work is allocated under the contract, and in any renewal of the contract or in the award of future contracts of a similar nature. The information will not be disclosed to anyone outside the Authority without the consent of the data subject, unless the Authority is required by law to make such disclosures.

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)**

The Client is striving to create a diverse and inclusive working environment where every individual has equality of opportunity to progress and to apply their unique insights to making the UK a great place for living. The Service Provider is expected to respect this commitment in all dealings with Natural England staff and service users.

Suppliers are expected to;

* support Defra group to achieve its Public Sector Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and to support delivery of [Defra group’s Equality & Diversity Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024).
* meet the standards set out in the [Government’s Supplier Code of Conduct](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplier-code-of-conduct)
* work with Defra group to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion impacts are addressed (positive and negative) in the goods, services and works we procure, barriers are removed and opportunities realised.

**Sustainable Procurement**

Addressing global sustainability impacts and realising additional community benefits within commercial activity is core to Defra group’s approach, working with its supply chain is key to achieving sustainable outcomes. In addition to supporting Defra group to meet its outcomes we look to understand and reduce negative sustainability impacts associated with our commercial activity and realise benefits.

The Client encourages its suppliers to share these values, work to address negative impacts and realise opportunities, measure performance and success.

Suppliers are expected to have an understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals, the interconnections between them and the relevance to the Goods, Services and works procured on the Client’s behalf

**Conflicts of Interest**

The concept of a conflict of interest includes but is not limited to any situation where an Involved Person or Relevant Body has directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure and/or affect the integrity of the contract award.

We expect suppliers to mitigate appropriately against any real or perceived conflict of interest through their work with government. A supplier with a position of influence gained through a contract should not use that position to unfairly disadvantage any other supplier or reduce the potential for future competition

Where the supplier is aware of any circumstances giving rise to a conflict of interest or has any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise you should inform the Authority of this as soon as possible (whether before or after they have submitted a quotation). Tenderers should remain alert to the possibility of conflicts of interest arising at all stages of the procurement and should update the Authority if any new circumstances or information arises, or there are any changes to information already provided to the Authority. Failure to do so, and/or to properly manage any conflicts of interest may result in a quotation being rejected.

Provided that it has been carried out in an open, fair and transparent manner, routine pre-market engagement carried out by the Authority should not represent a conflict of interest for the supplier.

Section 2: The Invitation

Specification of Requirements

## 2.1 Introduction

Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast (BNNC) Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is one of Natural England’s sentinel monitoring sites. Funding constraints for marine monitoring in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) has led to the adoption of a sentinel condition monitoring strategy. The sentinel site approach allows for regular monitoring of selected MPAs; this evidence can be used as a proxy for the condition of nearby MPAs with similar features. Natural England first trialled the sentinel site monitoring approach using divers in Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC (Northen & Doggett, 2019), but in more recent years the Natural England Dive Unit has focussed data collection in the BNNC SAC. The analysis and reporting of this data will inform the site condition assessment, the future monitoring of the BNNC SAC as a sentinel site, as well as the potential development of other sentinel monitoring sites.

The Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC is one of the most varied coastlines in the UK, stretching from Alnmouth to St Abbs Head and encompassing other European sites such as Lindisfarne Special Protection Area (SPA), the Farne Islands SPA, Northumberland Marine SPA, the Tweed Estuary SAC, St Abb's Head to Fast Castle SPA, Outer Firth of Forth & St Andrews Bay Complex pSPA and Berwickshire Marine Reserve which has been in place and locally managed since 1984. It contains a complex mix of marine habitats, associated species and communities which is unusually diverse for the North Sea, in both a UK and European context. The site contributes to an important range and variation of intertidal mudflats and sandflats and has one of the best examples of east coast clean sand and seagrass beds, and of moderately exposed reefs. Intertidal and submerged sea caves also contribute significantly to the site’s overall habitat diversity and international importance.

The site is designated for the following Annex I habitats: Large shallow inlets and bays, Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, Reefs and Submerged or partially submerged sea caves. The presence of Annex II species grey seal (Halichoerus grypus) is also a primary reason for the selection of this site.

For full site details please see: [Designated Sites View (naturalengland.org.uk)](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK0017072&SiteName=berwickshire%20and%20north%20northumberland%20coast&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&HasCA=1&NumMarineSeasonality=1&SiteNameDisplay=Berwickshire%20and%20North%20Northumberland%20Coast%20SAC)

Historically, subtidal reef surveys using scuba divers have been undertaken in BNNC SAC since the 1990’s (Brazier et al., 1996, Holt, 1994). In 2002 and 2011, Natural England contracted divers to undertake further sublittoral dive surveys which focussed on three main infralittoral sites in the Farne Islands: Knoxes Reef, Northern Hares and Crumstone (Mercer *et al*., 2002, Mercer 2011). More recently the Natural England Dive Unit, with additional external divers, undertook dive surveys in 2019, 2022, 2023, 2024. A report was produced for the 2019 survey, (Sugden, 2020 - report available upon request), but the most recent data (2022 – 24) has not yet been analysed.

The 2019 – 2024 surveys aimed to repeat surveys at the three historic sites, and to add new sites so that the condition of circalittoral and stoney reef sites could also be assessed.

All surveys were undertaken during mid – late July with the exception of the 2024 survey which was undertaken in September.

Prevailing wind conditions determined which sites could be surveyed; due to the exposed nature of the Farne Islands, this meant that some years the core sites could not be surveyed, and instead secondary sites were selected. A summary of sites surveyed by year are set out below:

Dive surveys consisted of three pairs: Pair 1 would set up the transects for Pairs 2 and 3, then undertake a Phase 1 survey. Pairs 2 and 3 would then undertake quadrat surveys, aiming for 3 – 4 quadrats per site each (i.e. 12 – 16 total per site). Video data was collected at some sites to create photogrammetry models; this can be provided to the contractor but is not expected to be used in data analysis.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2019** | **2022** | **2023** | **2024** |
| Knoxes Reef | Knoxes Reef | Knoxes Reef | Knoxes Reef (south side) |
| Crumstone | Crumstone | Crumstone | Cloves Car |
| Northern Hares | Northern Hares | Northern Hares | South of Big Harcar |
| Gun Rock | Gun Rock | Gun Rock |  |
| North of Big Harcar  | South of Big Harcar | South of Big Harcar |
| Knivestone | Knivestone | Little Harcar |
| North of Northern Hares | North of Northern Hares | Ron’s Secret Spot |
| St Cuthberts Gut | Wide Opens | St Cuthberts Gut |
| Cloves Car | Cloves Car | Cloves Car |

\*Green – infralittoral reef, orange – stoney reef, pink – circalittoral reef

## 1.2 References

Brazier, D.P., Holt, R.H.F. & Murray, E. 1996. Marine Nature Conservation Review Sector 5: The Marine Biology of south-east Scotland and north-east England: Overview. Peterborough. Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Holt, R.H.F. 1994. Marine biological survey of Eyemouth (Berwickshire) to Alnmouth (Northumberland). *Joint Nature* *Conservation Committee Report*, No. 157. (Marine Nature Conservation Review Report, No. MNCR/SR/24.)

Mercer, T., Howson, C., Bunker, F. (2002) Berwickshire and North Northumberland European Marine Site Sublittoral Monitoring. Aquatic Survey and Monitoring Ltd. English Nature, Contract No. FST 20-46-016

Mercer, T. (2011) Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast Sublittoral Monitoring. Aquatic Survey and Monitoring Ltd. Natural England, Contract No FST20/70/007

Northen, K.O. & Doggett, M. (2019). Condition assessment monitoring for reefs, Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Area of Conservation: subtidal reef communities survey July 2017 and 18. Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number295

Sugden, H. (2020). Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast Special Area of Conservation: Subtidal Reef Communities Survey at the Farne Islands 2019. Natural England Commissioned Reports.

## 2. Aims & Objectives

## 2.1 Aims

Natural England are seeking potential contractors to analyse subtidal reef data obtained from three dive surveys from 2022-2024 in BNNC SAC, compare to historic surveys, produce a survey report and import the resulting datasets into Marine Recorder.

The report should achieve the following aims:

* To assess the following attributes of subtidal reef habitats (stony, infralittoral, circalittoral) as part of the Annex I Reef feature of BNNC SAC::
	+ Extent of reef communities
	+ Distribution of reef communities
	+ Species composition of reef communities
* To compare data from all available datasets and to provide an evidence based preliminary assessment of the condition of subtidal reef in the BNNC SAC.
* Record and report on Non-Native species found during the survey.
* Provide recommendations for future monitoring

## 2.2 Objectives

Under this specification the successful contractor must:

1. Produce a concise, evidence based technical report detailing the work undertaken, and perform statistical analyses of data, including univariate and multivariate statistics, to enable the assessment of each attribute target. Where appropriate, contractors should validate the sample design/intensity by performing post survey power analysis. For example, species accumulation curves, tests for autocorrelation, power of change detection using diversity indices.
2. Include appropriate analyses to compare datasets between years (where possible), including historical data from 2002 and 2011) for BNNC SAC.
3. To inform Natural England’s site condition assessments, where possible the contractor should highlight evidence from this survey that could be used to assess whether the specified attributes have passed or failed against their targets within the BNNC SAC. This should include consideration for any variation across specific geographic areas, notable communities or exposure to environmental or anthropogenic factors.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of data collection methods, techniques and technical equipment.
5. Make recommendations on the effectiveness of the sentinel site monitoring programme. For example, how should future monitoring of the site be undertaken, and how regularly?
6. In addition, the contractor is not obliged to but is welcome to provide any overriding thoughts on the integrity of the whole feature or particular sub feature, which will be considered by site leads in their condition assessment process.
7. Alongside the report, provide associated data outputs including appropriate GIS outputs, Marine Recorder files, MEDIN compliant metadata, a confidence assessment of the data outputs and standard survey imagery.

Natural England will review this evidence when carrying out the overall feature(s) condition assessment in accordance with Natural England guidance which takes account of several further considerations.

##  3 Methods

## 3.1 Pre-survey Deskwork

Before the survey is carried out the contractor will discuss any pre-survey work with Lucy May, Natural England project officer, including:

1. Clarification of roles, responsibilities and expectations
2. Review existing information provided by Natural England.
3. Ways of working and close collaboration with NE.

For the 2022 – 2024 surveys, NE will provide data spreadsheets, Diving Project Plans (detailing methods and recording rules), Daily Supervisor Log forms and field notes. All data were entered into proformas at the time of the surveys and were subject to QA checks between recorders. Data from previous surveys (2019, 2011, 2002) is available in spreadsheet format or downloadable via Marine Recorder.

## 3.2 Data Analysis

Natural England expects robust and appropriate statistical analysis to be completed, and the results presented and discussed.

Where possible, the results should be compared to previous surveys and other relevant papers (including appropriate statistical analysis). Any observed changes should be set into context using other existing information.

## 3.3 Invasive Non-Native Species

Invasive non-native species (INNS) are considered to be one of the top five pressures directly driving biodiversity loss globally. Prevention is the key focus, particularly in marine environments.

The contractor must collect georeferenced photographs of INNS observed on site, record these on Marine Recorder, report to the Natural England Project Officer, and include within the survey report. Any species currently listed as ‘alert’ species should be flagged immediately to the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat and with the Natural England Project Officer. More information and guidance including ID guides can be found at www.nonnativespecies.org.

## 4 Outputs – Products and Timescales

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by Lucy May, Marine Ecology Senior Specialist (lucy.may@naturalengland.org.uk)

Draft reports should be provided in electronic MS Office Word \*.DOCX format for comment. A template and guidance exists for writing Natural England commissioned reports and should be followed and can be found here: Natural England Commissioned Report writing guidance. All reports should retain a clear suggested citation stating that it is a ‘Report to Natural England’

Data must be interpreted, analysed and presented in light of the overarching hypotheses for each contract. Contractors should pay particular consideration to the data and GIS required formats for information compatibility including MEDIN metadata standards and Marine Recorder provision.

All interpreted products following data analysis should accompany the draft report; these will include:

* All GIS datasets need to be provided in ESRI ArcGIS format compatible with ArcGIS version 10.2 and have attached metadata.
* All GIS files containing habitat data for each individual survey need to be produced to the MESH translated habitat Data Exchange Format (DEF) to the most detailed EUNIS habitat level possible. MNCR (v15.03) data should be added to the ORIG\_HAB column. The GUI provided by Natural England for each survey will be used, and as much information as possible (e.g. survey name, originally assigned feature/habitat name etc.) from the original dataset, as well as any documentation provided (where available) should be included in the resulting datasets to maintain a useful audit trail. As specified in the MESH DEF, data files must be provided as ESRI Shapefiles using geographic coordinates (lat/long) and the WGS84 datum. If the datasets supplied are in other projections, transformation using the appropriate petroleum (EPSG) transformation should be carried out as part of the data formatting procedure.
* If not included in the GIS data layers listed above all sampling locations, vessels tracks, and links to data obtained should also be included as a single GI layer.
* A MESH data confidence assessment for each habitat map should be calculated and provided in a ‘MESH confidence scoresheet’ \*.XLS file. The confidence assessment process is described and a template provided in the following MESH resources The MESH Confidence Assessment Scheme.

Natural England endorses the MEDIN initiative. Any data gathered/derived as part of this project must be submitted to Natural England in a way which expedites the MEDIN data archiving process through Data Archive Centres (DACs) with metadata meeting the MEDIN metadata discovery standard (MEDIN discovery metadata standard). A MEDIN compliant metadata XML file must be provided for each survey.

Natural England will supply the ‘MEDIN guidance for contractors’ document to successful contractors at the mini-tender stage.

All sample data (e.g. grab sample analyses, video/still photography analyses, PSA analysis and biotope lists, biological taxon data) need to be entered into Marine Recorder NBNdata.mdb (or similar) and an exported snapshot file of the data should be provided for QA. Natural England will enter the survey in Marine Recorder Online and grant access to the contractor to input data. Natural England will supply a ‘Marine Recorder guidance for contractors’ document to successful contractors.

The contractor must report any records of Invasive and Non Native Species observed on site on Marine Recorder and to the Natural England Project Officer as part of the survey report. Any species currently listed as ‘alert’ species should be flagged immediately to the GB Non Native Species Secretariat Species alerts. More information and guidance including ID guides can be found at GB non-native species secretariat and the Marine Aliens Project.

Copies of the original data spreadsheets or databases are to be provided in the appropriate Microsoft Office format. However, please be aware that using MEDIN marine biodiversity data guideline spreadsheets (available online under the marine biodiversity tab at MEDIN data guidelines) will ensure that biological taxon data is prepared correctly for entry into Marine Recorder and will facilitate the efficient entry of data into this system and the data archiving process in general. Natural England welcomes and supports the provision of raw data spreadsheets in the MEDIN format and expects that all raw datasheets will contain the mandatory fields in the MEDIN guidelines, regardless of their format.

All data products and electronic files must be appropriately named so they sufficiently describe the contents and are not purely a numerical value. All products should be named appropriately so that they can be clearly linked to the report/project.

Any species lists submitted will be compliant with current taxonomic names and synonyms (e.g. Marine Species of the British Isles and Adjacent Seas (MSBIAS), World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS))

Video and still camera filenames must include the recording start date and time. Position data must be included within the overlay information.

We will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award.

## 4.1 Timeline for project delivery

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Event | Date |
| Start-up meeting  | 11/02/2025 |
| Draft final report and associated products to be provided by contractor to Natural England | 24/03/2025 |
| Final report, maps and output to be delivered | 31/03/2025 |

Any delays to this timetable should be discussed with the Natural England Project Officer and delays not outside the control of the contractor will be penalised.

**5 Other**

In support of this contract NE will provide the winning supplier with:

* Project support from dedicated Project Officer
* Opportunity to feedback and discuss progress and the project
* Supporting GIS datasets (if required) under licence for use in this contract:
	+ Base map data from Ordnance Survey
	+ Aerial photography from Next Perspectives
	+ S-57 vector data from the UK Hydrographic Office (in ArcGIS format)\*
	+ Raster charts from Oceanwise\*

\*(Not to be used for Navigation)

Please see the following site for information on how to obtain access to the GI datasets listed above: <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-access-natural-englands-maps-and-data>

The intellectual property rights and copyright for all products (including photographs) will lie with Natural England. All data will be made available by Natural England under the Open Government Licence at the end of the project via data.gov.uk and the MEDIN Data Archiving Centres.

## 7 Contract Award Criteria

We will award this contract in line with the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) as set out in the following award criteria:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weighting** | **Scores** |
| Availability/ capacity  | Pass/fail  | Availability/ capacity  |
| Price | 50 % | Ranked in cost order |
| Quality of proposal for report content and data analysis.  | 50 % | Using criteria set out below |

For a score of 100: Excellent - Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a best-in-class thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.

For a score of 70: Good - Response is relevant and good. The response demonstrates a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled.

For a score of 50: Acceptable - Response is relevant and acceptable. The response provides sufficient evidence to fulfil basic requirements.

For a score of 20: Poor - Response is partially relevant and/or poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirements but contains insufficient / limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled.

For a score of 0: Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate response. The response fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.

## 7.1 Disclosure

All Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement, including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

For these purposes, the Authority may disclose within Government any details contained in your quotation. The information will not be disclosed outside Government during the procurement.

In addition, the Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which provide a public right of access to information held by public bodies. In accordance with these two statutes, the Authority may be required to disclose information contained in your quotation to any person who submits a request for information pursuant to those statutes.

By submitting a quotation you consent to these terms as part of the procurement.

## 7.2 Disclaimers

Whilst the information in this RFQ and any supporting information referred to herein or provided to you by the Authority have been prepared in good faith the Authority does not warrant that this information is comprehensive or that it has been independently verified.

The Authority does not:

* make any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFQ;
* accept any liability for the information contained in the RFQ or for the fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information; or
* accept any liability for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation or any other liability which cannot lawfully be excluded) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

Any supplier considering entering into contractual relationships with the Authority following receipt of the RFQ should make its own investigations and independent assessment of the Authority and its requirements for the goods and/or services and should seek its own professional financial and legal advice.

## 7.3 Protection of Personal Data

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 the contractor must agree to the following:

* You must only process any personal data in strict accordance with instructions from the Authority
* You must ensure that all the personal data that we disclose to you or you collect on our behalf under this agreement are kept confidential.
* You must take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees who have access to personal data.
* Only employees who may be required to assist in meeting the obligations under this agreement may have access to the personal data.
* Any disclosure of personal data must be made in confidence and extend only so far as that which is specifically necessary for the purposes of this agreement.
* You must ensure that there are appropriate security measures in place to safeguard against any unauthorised access or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage or disclosure of the personal data.
* On termination of this agreement, for whatever reason, the personal data must be returned to us promptly and safely, together with all copies in your possession or control.

## 7.4 General Data Protection Regulations 2018

For the purposes of the Regulations the Authority is the data processor.

The personal information that we have asked you provide on individuals (data subjects) that will be working for you on this contract will be used in compiling the tender list and in assessing your offer. If you are unsuccessful the information will be held and destroyed within two years of the award of contracts. If you are awarded a contract it will be retained for the duration of the contract and destroyed within seven years of the contract’s expiry.

We may monitor the performance of the individuals during the execution of the contract, and the results of our monitoring, together with the information that you have provided, will be used in determining what work is allocated under the contract, and in any renewal of the contract or in the award of future contracts of a similar nature. The information will not be disclosed to anyone outside the Authority without the consent of the data subject, unless the Authority is required by law to make such

# Appendix 1 – Technical Questions

Information to be completed by the tenderer. Quotes will be evaluated for both technical and commercial merit using the evaluation criteria below to determine which quote is the most economically advantageous.

**Ref:**

**Project:**

|  |
| --- |
| **1. Please supply a proposed schedule of work, stating the timescales you will be able to execute and deliver the products specified above. See Section 4.1 Timeline for project delivery – pass/fail**  |
| **2. Summary of your proposal for report content and data analysis methods. Specific objectives for the report writing are listed in Section 2.2. – 50 %**  |

# Appendix 2 – Costings

**Ref:**

**Project:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Commercial questions – 50 % Costs** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **ITEM** | **SPECIFICATION TITLE**  | **Staff to deliver work**  | **No. of days**  | **UNIT PRICE (ex. VAT) £**  | **TOTAL PRICE** **(ex. VAT) £**  |
| **1**  | Planning/pre-survey desk work and start up meeting *(Provide breakdown to include preparation of Project Plan, Risk Assessment and any start-up meetings with NE)* |  |  |  |  |
| **2** | Data analysis, GIS and reporting (*Provide breakdown to include field report, review of data (MEDIN compliant) and photos/videos, GIS and mapping, Marine Recorder entry)* |  |  |  |  |
| **3** | Please detail any assumptions made during pricing  |  |  |  |  |
| **4** | Other  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL COST** |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SUBMITTED BY: Contractor name**  |  |
| **Address**  |  |
| **Email**  |  |
| **Telephone**  |  |
| **Fax**  |  |