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| 22 August 2024  Our ref: InterPeat24 |  |
|  | Lateral  8 City Walk  Leeds  LS11 9AT |

**Request for Quotation**

**Marine Natural Capital Ecosystem Assessment - Inter-tidal peat project**

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 address by:

Email:Louise.Brown@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 06-Sep-2024

Time: 23:59

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**

Louise Martin (Louise.Martin@naturalengland.org.uk) 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.

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| Action | Date |
| Date of issue of RFQ | 22-Aug-2024 at 17:00BST |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 02-Sep-2024 at 17:00 BST |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 06-Sep-2024 at 23:59 BST |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 13-Sep-2024 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 16-Sep-2024 |
| Intended Delivery Date | 28-Feb-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 Englandwho 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.

**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**

**Background to Natural England**

Natural England are the government’s adviser for the natural environment in England. We help to protect and restore our natural world. Natural England is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs).

Our vision is ‘Thriving Nature for people and planet.’ We aim to achieve this through our mission ‘Building partnerships for Nature’s recovery.’ Our priorities for 2020 to 2025 support our mission and the ambitions of the [government’s 25 Year Environment Plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan). We aim for:

* a well-managed Nature Recovery Network across land, water, and sea, which creates and protects resilient ecosystems rich in wildlife and natural beauty, enjoyed by people and widely benefiting society
* people connected to the natural environment for their own and society’s wellbeing, enjoyment, and prosperity
* Nature-based solutions contributing fully to tackling the climate change challenge and wider environmental hazards and threats
* improvements in the natural capital that drives sustainable economic growth, healthy food systems and prospering communities
* evidence and expertise being used by a broad range of partnerships, organisations, and communities to achieve Nature recovery and enable effective regulation and accreditation
* being a values-led organisation that delivers excellent service standards to all partners, organisations and communities engaged in achieving Nature’s recovery.

For more information about our procurement policies please see [Procurement at Natural England - Natural England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement)

**Background to the specific work area relevant to this purchase - Marine Natural Capital Ecosystem Assessment**

Natural England's vision is to create a platform for a thriving marine environment, where nature is at the heart of decision-making.

Part of the broader Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment Programme (NCEA), the Marine Natural Capital Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) is Defra’s flagship 3-year research and development programme that will provide a robust evidence base, suite of tools and a framework where ecological, societal, and economic information is brought together in a holistic way, improving our understanding and helping us make better decisions about the marine environment.

Natural capital considers the value of nature for people and the economy and charges us to consider the ocean as a whole, interconnected system, rather than focussing on individual component parts like fishing, recreation or offshore wind.

The mNCEA began in 2021 with a pilot year, with the programme running from April 2022 until March 2025.It is establishing new ways of working and gathering new and innovative evidence to measure the health of our seas and how it’s changing over time.

By ensuring nature’s value is fully considered, mNCEA will ultimately transform marine decision-making in England across national and local governments, and in the private sector.

Specialists across Natural England, the Environment Agency, Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science, Marine Management Organisation and Joint Nature Conservation Committee are working collaboratively to develop and deliver the mNCEA programme.

*Key terms and concepts relating to natural capital*

Ecosystem services: the components of nature that are directly enjoyed, consumed, or used in order to maintain human wellbeing (Sunderland and others 2019). A natural capital approach describes the natural environment as a stock of assets from which there is a flow of ecosystem services to people who benefit from them.

Ecosystem Approach: a framework for the sustainable management of land and sea for the benefit of both biodiversity and people in a way that integrates ecological, social and economic understanding (Waters and others 2012). The Ecosystem Approach heavily influences how we do natural capital in practice in a participatory and equitable way.

Nature-based solutions (NBS): defined by the IUCN as actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits (Cohen-Shacham and others 2016). A natural capital approach can help us make arguments in favour of NBS by demonstrating the role of nature in human wellbeing and helps us decide where the best places to put them are.

More information on the natural capital approach can be found in the [Natural Capital Evidence Handbook: to support place-based planning and decision-making - NERR092 (naturalengland.org.uk)](https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4658498148499456)

*Rationale*

The following contract opportunity invites suitably experienced suppliers to work with Natural England to collate existing data on intertidal peat, to develop a data standard, and to create an initial spatial dataset (i.e. digital map layer(s) of intertidal peat) for subsequent enhancement. This spatial dataset will be used to support the mNCEA programme by providing both a preliminary indication of the location, extent and character of peat in intertidal areas; and by providing standards that will enable the development of more comprehensive maps of peat in coastal and marine contexts as resources allow.

*Timetable*

This project must be completed by 28 February 2025 and invoiced by mid-March 2025

**Requirement**

As part of the mNCEA programme, Natural England is seeking a consultant to collate existing data on intertidal peat, to develop a data standard, and to create an initial spatial dataset (i.e. digital map layer(s) of intertidal peat) for subsequent enhancement. This spatial dataset will be used to support the mNCEA programme by providing both a preliminary indication of the location, extent and character of peat in intertidal areas; and by providing standards that will enable the development of more comprehensive maps of peat in coastal and marine contexts as resources allow.

Intertidal peats have several facets to their significance: they record environmental and climate change; they provide habitats; they are an important carbon store; they may be features of geological or geomorphological interest; and they are an important archaeological resource preserving structures, artefacts and other traces of our predecessors and the environment they inhabited. As such, intertidal peats provide valuable regulating, provisioning and cultural ecosystem services. Consistent comprehensive mapping is required to support Natural Capital accounting and to support management, research and public engagement across these different facets.

As a consequence of these multiple facets, several public authorities in addition to Natural England have interests in mapping intertidal peat, including Historic England, the Environment Agency, and the British Geological Survey. An important consideration for this project is the development of common baselines and maintaining interoperability between spatial data on intertidal peat held by these public bodies.

Intertidal peats are vulnerable to coastal processes exacerbated by climate change, to climate adaptation impacts, and to development pressure. Habitat compensation and restoration projects may pose an inadvertent risk to intertidal peats if their location, extent and sensitivity to disturbance are not known.

There are a several sources of data suitable for mapping intertidal peats but there has been no comprehensive attempt to establish their extent and character. The project complements NCEA projects on the England Peat Map, which does not encompass intertidal areas.

This project is expected to help bring terrestrial natural capital ecosystem assessment (tNCEA) and mNCEA approaches together: intertidal peat provides a link between peat mapping on land and the potential for mapping extensive areas of peat (referred to historically as 'moorlog') offshore.

*Aim and Objectives*

The aim of this project is to explore how to improve the integration of natural capital and heritage objectives in terms of shared data resources. The shared data aspect will be explored through scoping the development of a method that can be used to map intertidal peat deposits and to frame them in terms of Natural Capital assets (quantity, quality, location), services and benefits.

The objectives of the project are:

1. To collate existing data on intertidal peats in England in a way which is compatible with [FAIR principles](https://defra.sharepoint.com/sites/WorkDelivery2763/Yr%203%20PBDM/7.4%20Integration%20with%20Heritage/7.4_Procurement/Peat/(FAIR%20Principles%20-%20GO%20FAIR%20(go-fair.org)) and [MEDIN Data standards](https://medin.org.uk/data-standards), and is suitable for use by multiple disciplines.
2. To establish a data standard for mapping and characterising intertidal peats, their services and benefits,
3. To provide a methodological link between mapping, recording, and surveying peat on land and in subtidal areas.
4. To generate a common dataset suitable for distribution via open government licence as a download or over the internet that can be enhanced by multiple disciplines and through citizen science.
5. To provide a preliminary overview of the Natural Capital assets (quantity, quality, location), services and benefits provided by intertidal peats.

It is accepted that the preliminary spatial dataset will be a point in time product and it will be made available via the Government’s [Open Data Geoportal](https://www.data.gov.uk/) on that basis. The preliminary dataset will also be used (and potentially modified) by other public authorities, hence the emphasis on interoperability. The project should keep in mind -- and report on -- the scope for creating a product that is both interoperable and updatable across different public sector uses / users.

Scope and activities

The focus of this project is on intertidal peat periodically exposed or recorded on and below beaches, foreshores and adjacent cliffs (notably low soft cliffs), where:

* 'Intertidal' encompasses the area between Low Water (LW = mean low water mark) and High Water (HW = mean high water spring tide); but where intertidal peats in intertidal areas are known to extend landward or seaward, then their known extent should be represented and not cut off at LW/HW boundaries.
* 'Peat' encompasses all organic and/or fine-grained soils/deposits indicative of former terrestrial/freshwater/brackish environments now in marine zones.

The project is not expected to address in detail peat buried beneath coastal marshes and reclaimed areas, or peat in fully submerged contexts (i.e. seaward of LW). It is, however, anticipated that this project will inform the mapping of such buried and submerged peats in due course, so examples and sources relating to buried and submerged peats should be noted.

Data on intertidal peats are to be collated from existing public sources. Natural England and other public bodies involved in the project will either make available or signpost sources, which are expected to include:

* Intertidal and Coastal Peat Database (Historic England);
* National Marine Heritage Record (Historic England);
* Protected area documentation (SSSIs; MPAs) (Natural England/Defra);
* CITIZAN data (via ADS/Unpath'd Waters portal);
* Reports and publications (including Historic England Research Reports; ADS Library)

Other appropriate publicly available sources should be identified, obtained and collated. Where sources are identified but cannot be obtained or collated during the project, they should nonetheless be noted as potential sources for future enhancements. In particular, it is unlikely to be practical within the timeframe of the project to extract data from highly granular sources such as records of individual borehole logs or grab samples, but sources of such data should be noted with information about their scope, relevance and potential use, plus supporting links/references.

Other initiatives potentially relevant to the future development of geospatial datasets on coastal and marine peats should be noted even where no source is yet available. Information about the scope, relevance and anticipated timescale of such initiatives should be included, with supporting links/references.

The collated sources should be incorporated into a preliminary spatial dataset (i.e. digital map layer(s) of intertidal peat). This preliminary spatial dataset should accord with a common standard developed for the project. The dataset should encompass:

* Intertidal peat records (a): information about intertidal peat
* Event records (b): information about the investigative event(s) through which (a) was obtained
* Source records (c): information about the sources used to populate (a) and (b), enabling acknowledgement of parties that originated records and/or carried out analysis/interpretation (potentially comprising multiple phases of analysis and interpretation).

The spatial dataset may comprise multiple shapefiles for (a) and (b), but preference should be given to minimising the number of layers and using attributes within those layers to enable queries and thematic views.

Preference should be given to mapping features as polygons reflecting actual/interpreted extents accompanied by confidence ratings, rather than points or lines. Where extents are nominal due to imprecision in the source, polygons of abstract shapes (e.g. triangles; hexagons) may be used. The successful contractor should liaise with Historic England to ensure that the outputs are compatible with National Marine Heritage Record.

In developing the common standard, relevant peat mapping methodologies and data standards should be reviewed, including standards relating to:

* Natural England recording and mapping (including [Data Exchange Standard for Peat Surveys](https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/news/working-towards-peat-data-standard)).
* Historic England’s [National Marine Heritage Record](https://historicengland.org.uk/research/support-and-collaboration/heritage-information-access-simplified/national-marine-heritage-record/) and [FISH](https://heritage-standards.org.uk/terminology/) terminology.
* third-party initiatives (e.g. [PeatDataHub](https://peatdatahub.net/); [Peatland ACTION - Data mapping portal](https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action/peatland-action-data-research-and-monitoring/peatland-action-data-mapping-portal)).
* [FAIR Principles](https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/) and [MEDIN Data standards](https://medin.org.uk/data-standards).

A draft of the common standard should be discussed and agreed with Natural England and other public bodies as advised by Natural England. The collated data will be mapped in accordance with this agreed standard.

A model for quantifying and characterising intertidal peats in terms of Natural Capital assets, services and flows should be prepared consistent with guidance given in the Natural England (2021) [Natural Capital Evidence Handbook](https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4658498148499456) (NERR092) and Jeffreys et al (2024) [The Contribution of Designated Heritage Assets to Biodiversity and Natural Capital in England: An approach to integrated conservation](https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/63-2023). Reference should also be made to taxonomies under development by Historic England for [Cultural and Heritage Capital](https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/social-and-economic-research/culture-and-heritage-capital/introduction/), as advised by Historic England.

Recommendations should be prepared on options for subsequent enhancement and application of the preliminary spatial dataset and common standard.

This project is of interest to multiple public sector stakeholders. A list of contact details will be provided by Natural England on project initiation. The stakeholders are to be informed of progress periodically and invited to participate in discussions and/or to review outputs as advised by Natural England.

Natural England will establish and maintain a small project steering group to review progress.

Deliverables

Project deliverables will comprise:

* A common standard for mapping intertidal peat agreed with Natural England and other public bodies as advised by Natural England.
* A spatial and interoperable dataset encompassing intertidal peat records, event records and source records.
* Notes on other sources of information on intertidal peats identified but not collated by the project.
* Notes on other initiatives potentially relevant to the future development of geospatial datasets on coastal and marine peats.
* A model for quantifying and characterising intertidal peats in terms of Natural Capital assets, services and flows.
* Recommendations on options for subsequent enhancement and application of the preliminary spatial dataset and common standard.
* A draft but fully proofed project report for review by Natural England and stakeholders identified by Natural England.
* A final project report taking into account comments on the draft provided by Natural England and stakeholders.
* A short note suitable for publication.

Documents should meet Natural England's and the government accessibility and publishing standards and will be provided fully proof read. Contractors should quote for at least one round of editing per proofed document, following review / quality control by Natural England.

Created works such as reports, images, map layers, films, audio recordings, software, code, and datasets or databases are legally protected from certain types of re-use and should be clarified with Natural England at the outset of the contract.

**Sustainability**

Natural England 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.

**Outputs and Contract Management**

*Indicative timetable*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reference | Deliverable | Responsible Party | Date of completion |
| [] | Peat mapping start-up meeting | Natural England | Sept 2024 |
| Deliverable D25 | Draft standard for mapping intertidal peat | Consultant | Nov 2024 |
|  | Review meeting | Natural England | Nov 2024 |
| Deliverable D26 | Preliminary map of intertidal peat in England | Consultant | Feb 2025 |
| Deliverable D27 | Model of intertidal peats as Natural Capital | Consultant | Feb 2025 |
| Deliverable D28 | Project report | Consultant | Feb 2025 |
| Deliverable D30 | Short note for publication | Consultant | Feb 2025 |
|  | Review meeting | Natural England | Feb 2025 |
|  | Post-project review meeting | Natural England | March 2025 |

*Initial Meeting*

The contractor will attend an initial meeting with NE specialists to discuss the project, review the aims and objectives, and agree upon a general approach, milestones, and expectations.

*Progress Updates*

The contractor will attend regular progress update meetings with the NE project team. We would like the contract to be highly collaborative, delivered in an agile manner to facilitate knowledge exchange throughout project.

The progress update meetings will follow a pre-determined agenda and focus on discussing the general approach to the development of the data standard, data collection and development of the dataset. As the project progresses the meetings will be focused on the anticipated products including the dataset, project report (including recommendations for subsequent enhancement) and production of the note for publication, literature searching and identifying potential avenues for further investigation. The frequency of the progress update meetings will be set out at the Initial Meeting and can be reviewed as the project progresses.

*Reporting*

* Draft Project Report*:* The contractor will provide Natural England with a fully proof read draft report, which details the background to the project/introduction, methodologies applied, results and recommendations. Natural England will provide a report template and guidance to be used for all reporting ([Natural England publishing standards for commissioned reports - NECR000](https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5790636781600768))
* Final Report:The final report will take account of and address comments on the draft project report and will include details the background to the project/introduction, methodologies applied, results and recommendations.

**Payment**

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

The Authority’s preference is for all invoices to be sent electronically, quoting a valid Purchase Order number. An invoice should be submitted after all the work has been completed.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of5 months to end no later than 28/02/25. Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period. We may at our sole discretion extend this contract to include related or further work. Any extension shall be agreed in writing in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

**Evaluation Methodology**

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

* Technical – 70%
* Commercial – 30%

**Evaluation criteria**

Evaluation weightings are 70% technical and 30% commercial, the winning tenderer will be the highest scoring combined score.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Award Criteria | Weighting | Evaluation Topic & Weighting | Sub-Criteria | Weighted Question |
| Technical | 70% | Service / Product Proposal | Methodology and approach | 1 Question  Q1 (50% of technical score available) |
|  |  |  | Key personnel | 1 Question  Q2 (20% of technical score available) |
|  |  |  | Company Experience and Project  Management | 1 Question  Q3 (30% of technical score available) |
| Commercial | 30% | Whole life cost of the proposed Contract | Commercial Model | 100% |

**Technical (70%)**

Technical evaluations will be based on responses to specific questions covering key criteria which are outlined below. Scores for questions will be based on the following:

| Description | Score | Definition |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Very good | 100 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. There are no weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority complete confidence that all the requirements will be met to a high standard. |
| Good | 70 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains minor weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that all the requirements will be met to a good standard. |
| Moderate | 50 | Addresses most of the requirements with most of the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains moderate weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that most of the requirements will be met to a suitable standard. |
| Weak | 20 | Substantially addresses the requirements but not all and provides supporting information that is of limited or no relevance or a methodology containing significant weaknesses and therefore raises concerns for the Authority that the requirements may not all be met. |
| Unacceptable | 0 | No response or provides a response that gives the Authority no confidence that the requirement will be met. |

Technical evaluation is assessed using the evaluation topics and sub-criteria stated in the Evaluation Criteria section above.

Separate submissions for each technical question should be provided and will be evaluated in isolation. Tenderers should provide answers that meet the criteria of each technical question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Methodology and approach** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| **Q1** Provide details of the methodology and approaches proposed to deliver the requirements of this project. | 1. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of the requirements. 2. Be a clear, practical, achievable, and cost-effective methodology to deliver these requirements. Please provide justification for approaches and methods that differ to those detailed in the specification. 3. Have information in sufficient detail to allow a full appraisal of the suitability of the approach to deliver for the project. 4. In response to the brief you should include your understanding of:  * natural capital concepts and the alternative terminologies that may be used to describe them * peat data sources * data standards |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key personnel** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| **Q2** Provide evidence of relevant staff qualifications / experience | 1. Please provide details of the key staff to be used for the project, their experience of undertaking similar work and any relevant qualifications they hold. Your response should:  * demonstrate experience in creating and delivering spatial and interoperable datasets e.g., encompassing intertidal peat records, event records and source records * outline any previous skills and experience in developing models for quantifying and characterising habitats in terms of Natural Capital assets, services and flows (or relevant and similar if not directly applicable) * contain a short pen portrait to evidence the relevant experience, skills and qualification for each key member of the project team.  1. A project team organisation diagram should be attached with your reply that provides a clear reporting structure. 2. Your reply should also provide a brief explanation of how you will ensure project continuity if key staff become unavailable. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Company Experience and**  **Project Management** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| **Q3** Provide details of previous experience and approach to managing this project. | 1. Please provide details of your company’s experience of successfully undertaking similar projects. You should provide examples if at least two relevant projects which meet some or all of these criteria that have been delivered in the last five years. 2. Please provide details on how the project will be managed that evidences a planned approach, identification and mitigation of key project risks and the ability to deliver high quality outputs within the required timeframes. 3. Outline how you intend to work with the Natural England project team, including strategies for iterative feedback processes 4. Your response should include an overview of the quality assurance procedures you will apply to the project to ensure that the methodology and final outputs are robust. 5. If you are using sub-contractors to deliver key elements of the project, please advise how they will be managed. 6. Please provide a draft programme timetable that includes the critical path for key activities. This can be in the form of a Gantt chart or similar attached with your reply. |

**Commercial (30%)**

The Contract is to be awarded as a fixed price which will be paid according to the completion of the deliverables stated in the Specification of Requirements.

Suppliers are required to submit a total cost to provide the deliverables stated in the Specification of Requirements. In addition to this the Commercial Response template must be completed to provide a breakdown of the whole life costs against each deliverable (i.e. Tasks / Additional Costs) used in the delivery of this requirement.

Calculation Method

The method for calculating the weighted scores is as follows:

* Commercial

Score = (Lowest Quotation Price / Supplier’s Quotation Price) x 40% (Maximum available marks)

* Technical

Score = (Bidder’s Total Technical Score / Highest Technical Score) x 60% (Maximum available marks)

The total score (weighted) (TWS) is then calculated by adding the total weighted commercial score (WC) to the total weighted technical score (WT): WC + WT = TWS.

**Information to be returned**

Please note, the following information requested must be provided. Incomplete tender submissions may be discounted.

Please complete and return the following information:

* completed Commercial Response template
* separate response submission for each technical question (in accordance with the response instructions)
* completed Mandatory Requirements (Annex 1)
* completed Acceptance of Terms and Conditions (Annex 2)

**Award**

Once the evaluation of the Response(s) is complete all suppliers will be notified of the outcome via email.

The successful supplier will be issued the contract, incorporating their Response, for signature. The Authority will then counter sign.

**Annex 1 Mandatory Requirements**

**Part 1 Potential Supplier Information**

Please answer the following self-declaration questions in full and include this Annex in your quotation response.

**Part 1.1 Potential Supplier Information:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 1.1(a) | Full name of the potential supplier submitting the information |  |
| 1.1(b) | Registered office address (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(c) | Company registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(d) | Charity registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(e) | Head office DUNS number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(f) | Registered VAT number |  |
| 1.1(g) | Are you a Small, Medium or Micro Enterprise (SME)? | (Yes / No) |

Note: See EU definition of SME <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en>

**Part 1.2 Contact details and declaration**

By submitting a quotation to this RFQ I declare that to the best of my knowledge the answers submitted and information contained in this document are correct and accurate.

I declare that, upon request and without delay you will provide the certificates or documentary evidence referred to in this document.

I understand that the information will be used in the selection process to assess my organisation’s suitability to be invited to participate further in this procurement.

I understand that the authority may reject this submission in its entirety if there is a failure to answer all the relevant questions fully, or if false/misleading information or content is provided in any section.

I am aware of the consequences of serious misrepresentation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 1.2(a) | Contact name |  |
| 1.2(b) | Name of organisation |  |
| 1.2(c) | Role in organisation |  |
| 1.2(d) | Phone number |  |
| 1.2(e) | E-mail address |  |
| 1.2(f) | Postal address |  |
| 1.2(g) | Signature (electronic is acceptable) |  |
| 1.2(h) | Date |  |

**Part 2 Exclusion Grounds**

**Part 2.1 Grounds for mandatory exclusion**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 2.1(a) | Please indicate if, within the past five years you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation been convicted anywhere in the world of any of the offences within the summary below. | |
|  | Participation in a criminal organisation. | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Corruption. | ((Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Fraud. | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Money laundering or terrorist financing | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
| 2.1(b) | If you have answered yes to question 2.1(a), please provide further details.  Date of conviction, specify which of the grounds listed the conviction was for, and the reasons for conviction.  Identity of who has been convicted  If the relevant documentation is available electronically please provide the web address, issuing authority, precise reference of the documents. |  |
| 2.1 (c) | If you have answered Yes to any of the points above have measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (i.e. Self-Cleaning) | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(d) | Has it been established, for your organisation by a judicial or administrative decision having final and binding effect in accordance with the legal provisions of any part of the United Kingdom or the legal provisions of the country in which the organisation is established (if outside the UK), that the organisation is in breach of obligations related to the payment of tax or social security contributions? | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(e) | If you have answered yes to question 2.3(a), please provide further details. Please also confirm you have paid or have entered into a binding arrangement with a view to paying, the outstanding sum including where applicable any accrued interest and/or fines. |  |

**Part 2.2 Grounds for discretionary exclusion**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 2.2(a) | The detailed grounds for discretionary exclusion of an organisation are set out on this [webpage](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551130/List_of_Mandatory_and_Discretionary_Exclusions.pdf), which should be referred to before completing these questions.  Please indicate if, within the past three years, anywhere in the world any of the following situations have applied to you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation | |
| 2.2(b) | Breach of environmental obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(c) | Breach of social obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(d) | Breach of labour law obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(e) | Shown significant or persistent deficiencies in the performance of a substantive requirement under a prior public contract, a prior contract with a contracting entity, or a prior concession contract, which led to early termination of that prior contract, damages or other comparable sanctions? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2 (f) | If you have answered Yes to any of the above, explain what measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (Self Cleaning) |  |

**Annex 2 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions**

I/We accept in full the terms and conditions appended to this Request for Quote document.

Company \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_