

www.gov.uk/naturalengland

Request for Quotation

##

## Request for Quotation

**Design and delivery of intermediate and advanced training in DNA and eDNA methods for biodiversity monitoring**

You are invited to submit a quotation for the requirement described in the specification below.

Please confirm, by email, receipt of these documents and whether you intend to submit a quote.

Your response should be returned to the following email address by: 05-09-2022 at 13:00 BST

Email: Harriet.Knafler@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 05/09/2022

Time: 13:00 BST

Ensure you state ‘Final Submission’ in the subject field to make it clear that it is your response.

**Contact Details and Timeline**

Harriet Knafler will be your contact for any questions linked to the content of the quote pack or the process. Please submit any questions by 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 | 15-08-2022 |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 24-08-2022 at 13:00 BST |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 05-09-2022 at 13:00 BST |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 12-09-2022 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 15-09-2022 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration  | 15-02-2023 (5 months) |

### 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 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs acting as part of Natural England |
| “RFQ” | Means this Request for Quotation and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to suppliers |
| “Contract” | Means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier. |

###

### Conditions applying to the RFQ

You should examine your response to the RFQ and related documents ensuring it is complete prior to submitting your completed quotation.

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

The supplier by submitting a quotation is deemed to accept the terms and conditions in the RFQ. Failure to comply with the instructions set out in the RTQ may result in the supplier’s exclusion from this procurement.

### 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.

#### Mandatory Requirements

The RFQ includes mandatory requirements and, if you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated. All mandatory requirements are set out in Bravo.

#### Clarifications

The Authority reserves the right to discuss, confidentially, any aspect of your quotation with you prior to any award of Contract to clarify matters.

#### 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 in writing and may extend the deadline for receipt in order to give you a reasonable time in which to take the amendment into account.

#### Conditions of Contract

The terms and conditions attached [Condensed Terms and Conditions](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/914956/standard-condensed-terms.odt) will be included in any contract awarded as a result of this RFQ process. The Authority will not accept any material changes to these terms and conditions proposed by a supplier.

#### Specification

The Authority is Natural England. The Authority’s priorities are to secure a healthy natural environment; a sustainable, low-carbon economy; a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply. Further information about the Authority can be found at: [Natural England.](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/)

**Background to Natural England**

Natural England is the government’s adviser for the natural environment in England. We protect England’s nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide. Within England, we are responsible for:

* promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity;
* conserving and enhancing the landscape;
* securing the provision and improvement of facilities for the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment;
* promoting access to the countryside and open spaces; and
* contributing to social and economic well-being through the sustainable management of the natural environment.

Conservation 21 outlines out how we will work to protect England’s nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide, in support of Defra’s ambitions for the environment.

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

DNA based applications have the potential to significantly change how we monitor and assess biodiversity. Natural England has been exploring the further use of these methods for environmental monitoring for several years, delivering a series of projects which focus on the development of DNA-based methods with potential in a particular area. DNA-based methods are becoming part of the suite of tools used by Natural England staff to monitor and assess ecosystems. The DNA team sits within the Natural England Evidence Directorate and aims to increase capability across Natural England to use DNA-based methods and critically assess data derived from DNA-based methods.

**Requirement**

We are looking to procure a package of ‘intermediate’ and ‘advanced’ training on DNA and eDNA based methods for biodiversity monitoring. These trainings will be offered to staff within Natural England who are working on projects which utilise DNA and will complement the inhouse ‘beginners’ training which we currently offer.

**Intermediate training:**
The intermediate training should take the form of an online session delivered over MS Teams or similar.

The contractor should create a training package specific to the needs of Natural England staff. The training should consist of a slide deck to be delivered by the contractor. The contractor should prepare a document of course notes and extra information to be sent to participants (either electronically or hard copy) prior to the course. The slide deck should also be circulated to participants after the course.

The contractor should arrange and deliver two duplicate dates for this training, convenient to all parties and prepare joining instructions for attendees. Interactive elements should be included. We suggest a three-hour session, which should include comfort break(s).

The content of the intermediate training course will be agreed in discussion between the project officer and contractor, but should cover at least the following areas:

* Design of a DNA based study, including sampling and DNA capture methods
* Choice of assay, including pros and cons of different primer sets
* Different sequencing platforms and their pros and cons
* Bioinformatic analysis of DNA data
* Assessing confidence in results from DNA based assays
* Development of DNA based metrics
* The future of DNA methods for ecosystem monitoring
* For all areas, both single species assays and metabarcoding assays should be discussed; and a range of examples given from different habitats and substrates

**Advanced training:**

The advanced training should be a site visit to a laboratory location within the United Kingdom and should take place after both intermediate training dates. This training should be delivered over the course of one day (suggested 10am – 4pm, with breaks). The contractor should organise the day and prepare joining instructions. They should prepare a document of notes and information to be given to participants on the day.

We would like attendees to gain hands on experience of the process, both in the ‘field’ (sample collection) and in the lab (DNA extraction, PCR, sequencing). Due to timescales, we do not require real data from our samples, but would like to mimic the real process as closely as possible, to gain an understanding of the steps involved.

Throughout the training day, the contractor should explain the reasoning behind all the field and lab processes. They should point out steps at which there are multiple options and describe the different options. They should make attendees aware of stages which are especially important, and which could affect confidence in the results.

The training content will be agreed in discussion with the project officer, but should cover:

* Sample collection, storage and processing techniques
* Lab techniques including DNA extraction, PCR, electrophoresis, sequencing
* Positive and negative controls; avoiding contamination; and QA

We would like to offer this advanced training day to between 10 and 20 staff members. In your tender return, **please quote a price per head should the price differ** depending on attendee numbers. Please also state the minimum and maximum number of attendees you would accept on this training course.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of **5 months** to end no later than 15/02/23. Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period. We may at our sole discretion extend this contract in order to deliver further training sessions using the same material. Any extension shall be agreed in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

**Outputs and timeline**

**Outputs:**

* Slide deck for intermediate training session
* Course notes / handout for intermediate training session
* Organise 2 dates for intermediate training, prepare joining instructions
* Deliver 2 (duplicate) intermediate training sessions
* Organise advanced training date, prepare joining instructions
* Course notes / handout for advanced training day
* Deliver advanced training day

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| **Requirements:** | **Timeline:** |
| Inception meeting with project officer to discuss course content and requirements | 19/09/2022 |
| Create slide deck for the intermediate training, with content specific to the needs of Natural England staff | By 31/10/2022 |
| Organise convenient dates for the trainings, in discussion with project officer | By 31/10/2022 |
| Prepare joining instructions for attendees | By 15/11/2022 |
| Deliver intermediate training session 1 | 01/11/22 - 30/11/22 |
| Deliver intermediate training session 2 | 16/01/23 - 20/01/23 |
| Deliver advanced training day | 25/01/23 - 15/02/23 |

**Prices**

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

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | **Price excluding VAT** | **Price including VAT** |
| Preparing intermediate training session |  |  |
| Delivering 2 x intermediate training sessions |  |  |
| Preparing advanced training session |  |  |
| Delivering advanced training session (10 participants) |  |  |
| Delivering advanced training session (20 participants) |  |  |

**Quotation Submission**

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

Price – 50%

Quality – 50%

The following quality criteria are weighted in accordance with the importance and relevance

attached to each one.

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| Criteria | Weighting | To include: |
| **Experience of key personnel in delivering training** | 30 | * Please submit pen portraits/thumbnails of staff member(s) who will be preparing and delivering the training
 |
| **Experience of delivering similar training sessions** | 30 | * Please detail your experience of delivering training sessions in similar areas, and of a similar level
 |
| **Experience in DNA methods for biodiversity monitoring** | 40 | * Please detail your experience and expertise in using DNA based methods for monitoring ecosystems
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| **Score** | **Justification** |
| For a score of hundred (100):   | Excellent - Response is completely relevant and excellent overall.  The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full. |
| For a score of seventy (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 fifty (50):   | Acceptable - Response is relevant and acceptable.  The response provides sufficient evidence to fulfil basic requirements. |
| For a score of twenty (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 zero (0):   | Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate response.  Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement. |

**Contract Management**

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by Harriet Knafler (Harriet.Knafler@naturalengland.org.uk).

A start up video meeting will be arranged with the awarded contractor to discuss the planned works, followed by regular meetings as required. Fortnightly updates by email will be required from the successful contractor, with the project manager available to answer questions as necessary when they arise.

We will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award. Invoice to be submitted at the completion of the contract.

### 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.

### 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 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.

**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.