

Request for Quotation

Nutrient Neutrality – Developing detailed design guidance for wetland mitigation solutions to nutrient pollution

July 2023

Request for Quotation

Developing detailed design guidance for wetland mitigation solutions to nutrient pollution

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:

Email: rupert.hammond@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 16th August 2023

Time: 5pm

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

Contact Details and Timeline

Rupert Hammond 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.

Action	Date
Date of issue of RFQ	19 th July 2023
Deadline for clarification questions	13 th August 2023
Deadline for receipt of Quotation	16 th August 2023
Intended date of Contract Award	29 th August 2023
Intended Contract Start Date	4 th September 2023
Intended Delivery Date	14 th January 2024

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):

Words/Expression	Meaning
“Authority”	Means the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs acting as part of Natural England.
“Contract”	Means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier
“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 quotation 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 [are available online](#) and 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

Background to Natural England

Natural England (NE) is the Government's advisor on the natural environment. It provides practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England's natural wealth for the benefit of everyone. Natural England's remit is to ensure sustainable stewardship of the land and sea so that people and nature can thrive. It is our responsibility to see that England's rich natural environment can adapt and survive intact for future generations to enjoy.

Further information about the Authority can be found at: [Natural England](#).

Background to Nutrient Neutrality

Investing in nature generates prosperity. A healthy environment and a vibrant economy must go hand in hand - our economic prosperity and well-being depends upon doing so. Through Nutrient Neutrality Natural England and Government are working with local planning authorities to enable the homes the country needs to be built while cleaning up our waterways.

Nutrient pollution is an urgent problem for freshwater habitats and estuaries which provide a home to wetland birds, fish, and insects. Increased levels of nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus can speed up the growth of certain plants, disrupting natural processes and devastating wildlife. The impacts for people are also significant, with dirty waterways spoiling enjoyment of the outdoors.

While the government has taken substantial steps to tackle the issue, this scheme will fast track progress in hotspot areas alongside existing approaches including nutrient credit trading schemes, Local Planning Authority (LPA)-led mitigation schemes and onsite mitigation solutions integrated into the design of housing developments to unlock homebuilding across the country.

Defra and DLUHC will invest £30 million pounds to fund the Natural England scheme which will complement and not replace or compete with existing mitigation schemes.

It will provide additional mitigation where it is needed and can work in combination with schemes that are currently in place or under development.

To this end Natural England is working with landowners and partners in order to establish constructed wetlands in appropriate locations within priority catchments in

order to generate nutrient credits that property developers will be able to purchase in order to fulfil planning requirements.

The key deliverables for this contract will be:

The objective of this project is to develop detailed design guidance, based on the best-practice approaches taken by professionals in the feasibility, design and maintenance of treatment wetlands for nutrient mitigation. This will ensure that a set standard for high-quality nature-based solutions is delivered through the Nutrient Mitigation Scheme and other nutrient neutrality mechanisms.

The guidance will be used by design and build contractors, as well as local authorities and consenting bodies to ensure wetland proposals are technically robust and will complement the structure of the wetland mitigation framework, as far as is achievable and logical.

This should focus on integrated constructed wetland, free surface wetland and other viable wetland mitigation proposals, taking into account the degree of certainty that nutrient reductions will be achieved, alongside a range of other considerations including compatibility with wider habitat restoration opportunities.

The guidance must:

- Set out the processes, calculations, tools and formatting of wetland design processes from feasibility and concept design stages through to detailed design.
- Utilise at least one case study to demonstrate real-world application of the principles and processes within the guidance.
- Outline planning, permitting and consenting considerations and signposting to how to carry out these stages effectively.
- Specify the tasks involved in implementation, operation and maintenance of treatment wetlands, and their associated infrastructure, including timescales and waste management processes.
- Set out how the above stages key into the existing wetland mitigation framework with degrees of confidence assigned to each process where more than one pathway is presented
- Provide information on designing wetlands in areas of competing interests; such as where flood management or abstraction pressures exist. (e.g. minimising the impact of abstraction/offtake on depleted reaches of watercourses)

- Contain information on opportunities to integrate positive biodiversity outcomes within and adjacent to the wetland proposals.
- Be written for an informed audience, including technical designers and engineers, local authorities and other consenting bodies, who can be assumed to have an existing basic understanding of wetland processes and design parameters.
- Outline how to deliver high-quality wetlands that are robust to changing climatic variables. (e.g. how to design wetlands where flows may become more variable due to future prolonged drought and rainfall events)
- Provide a description of how costs would be determined from a detailed design (i.e. what are the cost items associated with the design and delivery of a treatment wetland solution).
- Be based on the best available evidence.

The design approaches should be bespoke and proportional to the types of solutions covered in the guidance and include the parameters used to delineate the selection of one design process over another.

The rationale, key evidence and principles that underpin any developed design guidance including any criteria and/or tools should be clearly set out in the report to an extent which would enable NE to defend the position it has come to when recommending the appropriateness of any wetland design processes.

Tenders should set out details of what approach and/or tools it will be possible to develop through this project based on existing best available evidence. Other potential alternative or more innovative approaches will be considered but they should be clearly explained as to how they would deliver the objectives of the project.

Specification of Requirements

This section sets out the contract requirements. Suppliers must explain how they will deliver the required outputs within the specified timeframe and to budget. They must further demonstrate that they have the required skills and experience. Information on how this will be evaluated can be found below under Quotation Submission.

This is a one-off project, but there may be a need to further develop the approach and/or tools in the future.

At the end of the project a one-hour webinar should be delivered (and recorded) for local authority staff to explain the approach and/or tools developed.

Purpose of this Contract

To develop detailed design guidance for wetland mitigation solutions to nutrient pollution.

Outputs and Contract Management

The main outputs for this project will be:

- A project inception meeting by video call (e.g. MS Teams/Zoom) within the first week of the project start. All costs associated with attending the inception meeting must be incorporated into the fixed price. The successful Tenderer must identify individuals who will manage the project and nominate a representative for day-to-day contact with the authority's project officer.
- Monthly calls with the project steering group to provide updates on progress in line with agreed deliverables and milestones, emerging findings, get knowledge input and feedback on deliverables.
- Contact by email with the contract manager every two weeks providing updates on progress and any issues. Any issues in delivering the project should be raised as soon as possible.
- Draft report which includes the proposed format and structure as well as an explanation of the key evidence and principles on which it is based, and other tools developed within 2 weeks to provide comments.
- Quality-assured final report and any tools developed to be provided to project manager in Word and/or Excel format. If any other format is to be used, this has to be agreed with the project manager at the start of the project and would need to be something which is accessible to all NE staff.
- Powerpoint slides and recorded webinar providing an explanation of the approach/tools developed.

Accessibility

The document should be created in line with Defra's accessibility requirements.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/about/accessible-documents-policy>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps>

MS Word's accessibility checker (in the review tab) can be used to help ensure that the document is accessible.

Sustainability

As a delivery partner, the successful contractor is expected to pursue sustainability in their operations, thereby ensuring Natural England is not contracting with a supplier whose operational outputs run contrary to Natural England's objectives. The successful contractor will need to approach the project with a focus on the entire life cycle of the project. The successful contractor is likely to be able to provide a copy of their environmental policy and any environmental accreditation schemes such as ISO 14001 or EMAS which they have been awarded or are working towards.

Operational Sustainability - Explain to Natural England what your organisation is doing to incorporate sustainability within its operations. This may include any details you are able to provide in relation to steps you may be taking to reduce your carbon footprint.

Environmental Management - Detail what you will do to assess the environmental impact of completing this project and provide mitigations. Examples may include operational measures to reduce emissions and noise impacts, efficient energy use, efficient use of raw materials and minimisation of waste where possible.

Timetable

Project Milestone	Detail	Date
Project inception meeting and agreement of methodology	Meeting to discuss the proposed approach to the project. The bidder should confirm that there will be availability to attend a project inception meeting during the week highlighted in the next column.	5 th September 2023
Project Plan	A brief project plan is required to be sent to the NE Project Officer, following the Inception Meeting. This will set out the methodology, key tasks, dependencies and project timeline.	Within 2 weeks of the inception meeting on 3 rd August 2023
Deliverables Project report	Draft reports together with presentation to NE on the findings.	17 th November 2023

	Final Reports	14 th January 2024
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Supporting Documentation

The following supporting documentation should be provided:

- Research methodologies
- Health & safety policies/certificates
- Environment policies
- VAT registration number
- Public liability insurance
- Professional indemnity insurance
- CV's
- Past work
- Sustainable procurement practices

Contract Management

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by Rupert Hammond (rupert.hammond@naturalengland.org.uk).

The outputs of the contract are included in the specification above. Fortnightly check-ins with the Project Officer via a Teams call or email, to discuss progress and/or any issues, will be required from July 2023 onwards, for the duration of the contract.

The project outputs are to be produced in a written final report in Word and pdf formats, as well as any accompanying visuals/graphics, spreadsheets and models. All reports will be clearly presented, concise, written in plain English with a target audience of an educated lay person. Reports will be supplied by email in Microsoft Word 97-2003 and pdf formats.

It is NE's expectation that all final project reports are published, NE however reserves the right to determine if and how results should be published.

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

Payment can be made in two instalments, with 25% to be invoiced upon receipt of the inception note, and the remaining 75% to be invoiced upon agreement of the final deliverables.

Prices

Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, inclusive of VAT. Prices must be submitted in an Excel spreadsheet. Bidders should note that as a guide the anticipated budget will be between £30,000 and £48,000 inclusive of VAT. This should be used as a guide to give an indication of the depth and breadth of the study and the resources required to complete the work.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 4 months, to end no later than 14/01/2024. Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period.

Quotation Submission

Completed submissions should include the following items:

- evidence that you meet the quality criteria set out in the specification;
- your proposed pricing structure (to include name of staff, grade, day rate and total number of days allocated to each task and deliverable) ;
- your proposed workplan for the project
- Your key personnel who will be directly involved with this contract, their role and time allocation for the elements of the project and their wetland expertise and experience. We will be looking for a high level of expertise and experience in:
 - The design of free surface water and integrated constructed wetlands for improving water quality.
 - Understanding of planning, permitting and consenting barriers and solutions relating to constructed wetlands.
 - Optimisation of additional benefits beyond water quality improvement (i.e. biodiversity, habitat creation, flood risk, accessibility, social value etc.)
 - Understanding the efficacy of free surface wetlands for reducing nitrogen and phosphorus, how to determine this and the factors that affect this.
 - Developing approaches and/or tools for use by non-technical individuals.
 - Understanding of the Habitat Regulations Assessment process, nutrient neutrality and the requirements mitigation therefore will need to meet (including experience in the existing wetland mitigation framework).
- Proposed methodology
- Quality Assurance (QA), project management and risk management measures
- Management of sustainable impacts

- Health and Safety

Submissions will be reviewed and then evaluated as set out below:

- each criteria will be given a score from 0 to 100;
- the criteria scores will be weighted to create a final submission score;
- all of the final submission scores will be ranked;
- the field date will be confirmed;
- the agency with the highest weighted score for the chosen field date will be awarded the contract - subject to the terms and conditions within the RFQ.

If the start date of the contract should substantially change, then agencies will be asked for their availability in the order of ranked final submission score. We will award this contract in line with the most economically advantageous tender. Suppliers will be scored on price and quality:

- Price – 50%
- Quality – 50%

A detailed breakdown of how the quality criteria will be assessed is included in the table below:

Question Number	Question	Maximum Available Score	Weighting %	Maximum length
E01	<p>Understanding of Natural England's requirement</p> <p>Outline your understanding of Natural England requirements in this specification.</p>	100	15%	500 words
E02	<p>Outline the approaches you will use to deliver this contract, giving justification for the methods proposed.</p> <p>Please include a provisional project plan, including details of how the project will meet the key deliverables.</p> <p>We would also ask that you allocate the number of days to the delivery of each task and deliverable.</p>	100	45%	800 words

	<p>Include a short assessment of risks and dependencies affecting the project including input required from Natural England, and your proposals for how these will be managed and mitigated.</p> <p>Provide a brief description of how the work will be quality assured.</p>			
E03	<p>Experience of the project team</p> <p>Provide details of the project team and the key personnel, with their seniority, who will be involved in delivering the project. You should demonstrate the team's skills and experience in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed Wetland Design and Build • Delivering contracts for public sector clients, particularly contracts with an environmental focus. <p>Please indicate a CV and the number of days each member of the team has allocated on this project as well as who will lead on each task.</p> <p>In addition, please provide two (2) examples of your current or previous work within government departments, wider public sector, or equivalent that are similar in subject matter or scope to this requirement.</p>	100	40%	800 words (N.B. CVs will be excluded from this word count)
Total			100%	

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.

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.

Further information

Contract Manager – Rupert Hammond, Habitat Delivery Lead Adviser – Natural England

Tel – 07435 870160

Email – rupert.hammond@naturalengland.org.uk

Alternative Contact – Mark Jones, Nutrient Mitigation Delivery Partnerships and Commissioning – Natural England

Tel – 07876 146111

Email – mark.jones@naturalengland.org.uk

Alternative Contact – Dan Roberts, Project Manager (Nature-based Solutions), Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (*as the Nutrient Mitigation Scheme Secretariat*)

Tel – 07880 096683

Email – dan.roberts@wwt.org.uk

