

www.gov.uk/naturalengland

Request for Quotation

##

## Request for Quotation

**Review of Hydrological Evidence Base for Arun Valley**

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: 17:00 on 23/12/2022

Email: Cath,jackson@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 23/12/2022

Time: 17:00 am

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

**Contact Details and Timeline**

Cath Jackson (cath.jackson@naturalengland.org.uk) 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 | at 30th-Nov-2022 Time: 17:00 GMT |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 14-Dec-2022 at 17:00 am GMT |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 23-Dec-2022 at 17:00 am GMT |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 9-Jan--2023 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 9-Jan-2023 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration  | 31-Mar-2023  |

### 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 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://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement) 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.

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/)

#### Specification

Natural England is a science-led organisation, and it is imperative that our evidence base is strong and robust in order to restore nature.

The Arun Valley is in the South Downs National Park within the Arun and Western Streams Catchment, West Sussex. The sites of interest are three floodplain wetlands that have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

* Waltham Brooks SSSI
* Amberley Wild Brooks SSSI
* Pulborough Brooks SSSI

The central Arun valley is hydro-geologically complex with greensand and chalk aquifers supplying groundwater, areas of deep peat in Amberley and Pulborough and river alluvium.

The variation in chemical status of the water, sources of water supply and the surrounding geology underpinning the wetlands has allowed the development of a remarkable flora and fauna. The location on flyway and conservation management has led to an internationally important wintering bird numbers and nationally important numbers of nesting birds. All three SSSIs are part of the Arun Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, with Pulborough Brooks and Amberley Wild Brooks also included in the Arun Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The original hydrological environment of the valley has been very significantly modified over many centuries by a human-made drainage network and more recently abstractions including for public water supply, and flood risk management such as the creation of flood banks largely divorcing the floodplain wetlands from the river except during overtopping and via some structures. A small area of Waltham Brooks is directly connected to the river.

Natural England is currently reviewing the sites’ condition, though this will not be fully completed until 2023, however the recent Hicks et al study, 2019 study[[1]](#footnote-2) concluded that different parts of the site appear to be showing signs of drying out which may be impacting on the designated features. To determine the possible causes of this, Natural England has commissioned separate studies of the hydro-ecology and peat deposits on both Amberley Wild Brooks and Pulborough Brooks. These studies should lead to an understanding of the site’s hydrology currently and changes over time from when the sites were in a more naturalised state. In particular these studies have investigated the peatland’s development, changes, and modifications over time, and impacts on biological features and peat deposits (current condition). In addition, a separate ongoing investigation by the water company, Southern Water, into the impact of the abstraction is ongoing with an expected delivery date of 2025.

There are several historical studies and historical evidence alongside the condition report that have led Natural England to be concerned about the combined impacts of climate change and abstraction alongside other pressures on the protected sites and their interest features. Now that the studies are in the final phase of review for publishing, Natural England requires a review and evaluation of the combined evidence.

**Work requirement**

The contractor is required to produce an evidence review that states whether the data and information is sufficient to answer the questions set out below and comment to what degree of certainty the questions have been addressed by the available evidence base. Any gaps in evidence base should be presented and recommendations for further work included.

The review should aim to answer the following questions and state whether the evidence is sufficient in addressing these. The review should also assess how certain the evidence is in answering the questions and what the data limitations and remaining uncertainties are:

* What are the main water supply pathways to the protected sites now and in the scenario of a naturalised unimpacted state (prior to hydrological related changes such as abstraction and flood risk management schemes)?
* Are the protected sites connected to the underpinning abstracted groundwater aquifer (Folkestone beds in the Greensand)?
* Is there evidence that climate change is acting alone or with the existing pressures such as abstraction and drainage, and potentially contributing to these issues such as the sites drying?
* Is there evidence that the protected sites and their interest features are impacted by water resources/ water availability pressures such as drying out?
* IIs there evidence that the protected sites, species (designated) and condition are deteriorating and declining is linked to drying or insufficient water supply, as well as via indirect pressures from drying/ insufficient water supply such as changes/ deterioration in water quality and chemistry?
* Is there evidence that the abstraction is contributing to the declines in species abundance, population distribution and/ or site condition?
* Can the contribution of the abstraction to the declines in site condition and/ or species population, or abundance be ruled out on objective evidence?
* What other factors have been identified as contributing to the declines in species and site condition with particular reference to the sites’ hydrology?

**Evidence to be reviewed**

This evidence will be provided by Natural England, Environment Agency (EA) and/or their consultants.

The list of evidence to be reviewed or necessary to answer the above questions should be finalised in the start-up meeting. The evidence review should take account of when data was collected and if elements of reports have been superseded by subsequent data but should include as a minimum:

* Conservation advice including the Citations for the relevant SSSIs, the SAC and SPA, the Ramsar site information sheet, Conservation Objectives for the SPA and SAC, Supplementary Advice to the Conservation Objectives, Site Improvement Plan for the SAC and SPA, and Site Monitoring Specifications (formerly called Favourable Condition Tables)
* Information collected for the 2021/22 SSSI condition assessment including invertebrate surveys, bird population data, habitat surveys, water quality data, *Anisus vorticulus* surveys and other monitoring relevant data
* [**Spatial and temporal vegetation analysis of Amberley Wild Brooks over two decades**](https://britishandirishbotany.org/index.php/bib/article/view/27)Damien Hicks, Frances Abraham, Louise Bardsley, Mags Cousins, Elaine Webster, Janet Whitman 309-326 2019-12-14 British and Irish Botany
* NE commissioned draft Arun Valley diffuse water pollution plan and supporting information
* NE commissioned draft peat and hydrological reports for Pulborough and Amberley Wild Brooks SSSIs
* Back from the brink report on *Anisus vorticulus* for Pulborough Brooks
* Water company groundwater numeric model both emerging and previously used in wellfield reconfiguration work
* Water level management plan
* Arun Valley Sustainability study – 2008 final report
* Appropriate assessments for Southern Water Hardham wellfield reconfiguration and supplementary correspondence including diagrams and further assessment from the company
* Evidence used to support the abstraction licences modifications and review in 2019-2022

**Out puts**

The successful outputs should comprise:

1. List of evidence to be reviewed – agreed in start up meeting as detailed above.
2. The review should be produced using the [Natural England Commissioned Report (NECR) template](http://nepubprod.appspot.com/publication/5790636781600768) (compatible format). The report should include the reasoned answers to all the above questions explaining the methodology and justification to conclusions, highlighting the limitations and areas of uncertainty. This report once finalisedwill be published on Natural England’s access to evidence catalogue website.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 3 months and to end no later than 31/03/23. 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 advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

**Prices**

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

**Quotation Submission**

In returning a quotation, the contractor should include details of their proposed methodology for completing the requirements set out above, including how they proposed to review data sets and reports. The contractor should also provide examples of similar or related evaluation and review and evidence of competency in hydrology hydroecology and ecology and detail of the staff to be used and their relevant experience.

The successful contractor must be able to demonstrate no conflict of interest with any live cases related to the Arun Valley.

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 quality criteria are set out below, 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: |
| **Relevant Experience of contractor on nature-based solutions**  | 80 | * Please submit any examples of similar project delivery separately or in an annex to the main bid.
 |
| **Methodology** |  10 | * Please submit outline method of how you propose to review the data and evidence .
 |
| **H&S & Sustainability** | 10 | To include:* Please detail how you will manage any H&S risks and your organisations sustainability policies.
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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 Cath Jackson who can be contacted by cath.jackson@naturalengland.org.uk . Other Natural England specialists and subject matter experts will review tenders, technical documents and be included in project meetings as required.

It is expected that a project inception and review meetings will be carried out remotely via MS Teams. Up to two additional MS teams review meetings can also be scheduled in to be agreed at the inception meeting.

The following management is proposed

* Inception meeting – agree and provide data to be reviewed First week of contract
* Submission of draft report and data set 20-Feb-2023
* Draft report review meeting (1 – 2 hour/s) Week commencing 27-Feb-2023
* Final report and data set submission for final QA 24-Mar-2023
* Contract ends 31-Mar-2023

We will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award. You should invoice us once the work has been completed following the final report submission and agreement.

### Disclosure

All Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. 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.

1. [View of Spatial and temporal vegetation analysis of Amberley Wild Brooks over two decades (britishandirishbotany.org)](https://britishandirishbotany.org/index.php/bib/article/view/27/51) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)