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Request for Quotation

Spined Loach *Cobitis taenia* survey of the Ouse Washes Special Area of Conservation and SSSI.

27 July 2023

Request for Quotation

Spined Loach *Cobitis taenia* survey of the Ouse Washes Special Area of Conservation and SSSI.

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: jaclyn.lake@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 18/08/2023

Time: 12:00 GMT

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

Jaclyn Lake 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.

Date of issue of RFQ	28-July-23 at 12:00 GMT
Deadline for clarifications questions	11-August-23 at 12:00 GMT
Deadline for receipt of Quotation	18-August-23 at 12:00 GMT
Intended date of Contract Award	25-August-23 at 12:00 GMT
Intended Contract Start Date	04-September-23
Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration	29-Feb-2024

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):

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

Conditions applying to the RFQ

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

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

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

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

Acceptance of Quotations

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

Costs

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

Self-Declaration and Mandatory Requirements

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

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

Clarifications

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

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

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

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

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

The Authority reserves the right to seek clarification of any aspect of a quotation and/or provide additional information during the evaluation phase to carry out a fair evaluation. Where the Authority seeks clarification on any aspect of the

quotation, the supplier must respond within the timeframe requested by the Authority.

Amendments

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

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

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

Conditions of Contract

The Authority's standard Condensed Terms and Conditions provided as part of the RFQ will be included in 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, inclusive 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](#).
- meet the standards set out in the [Government's 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 is the government's adviser for the natural environment in England. We help to protect and restore our natural world. Natural England monitors the condition of features of special interest on protected sites. This specification of requirements is for a spined Loach *Cobitis taenia* survey of the Ouse Washes SSSI and SAC.

Project Title: Spined Loach *Cobitis taenia* survey of the Ouse Washes Special Area of Conservation and SSSI.

Background to the specific work area relevant to this purchase

This survey is being sought by the West Anglia Area Team, to continue the monitoring of the spined Loach feature to date in order for us to determine the condition of the feature in the SAC waterbodies and also in the washland ditches. The survey should be carried out in October 2023 with the final report submitted at the end of February 2024.

Requirement

Scope and Objective

The objective is to undertake a feature assessment of spined Loach *Cobitis taenia* which is a monitored species feature of the Ouse Washes SSSI/SAC in order to:

1. Inform our ongoing understanding of the conservation status of this species within the SSSI (required by NE and our multiple partners on the Ouse Washes) within the locations it is known from and monitored previously but also new areas that to our knowledge have not been surveyed for spined Loach such as the washland ditches.
2. Provide an analysis of environmental requirements for spined Loach in the context of the operation of the Ouse Washes as a flood storage reservoir, including the Counter Drain (CDOB), informing our understanding of the impacts of the managed hydrological regime of the Ouse Washes.
3. Inform Natural England's condition assessment for spined Loach within the Ouse Washes SSSI and SAC.

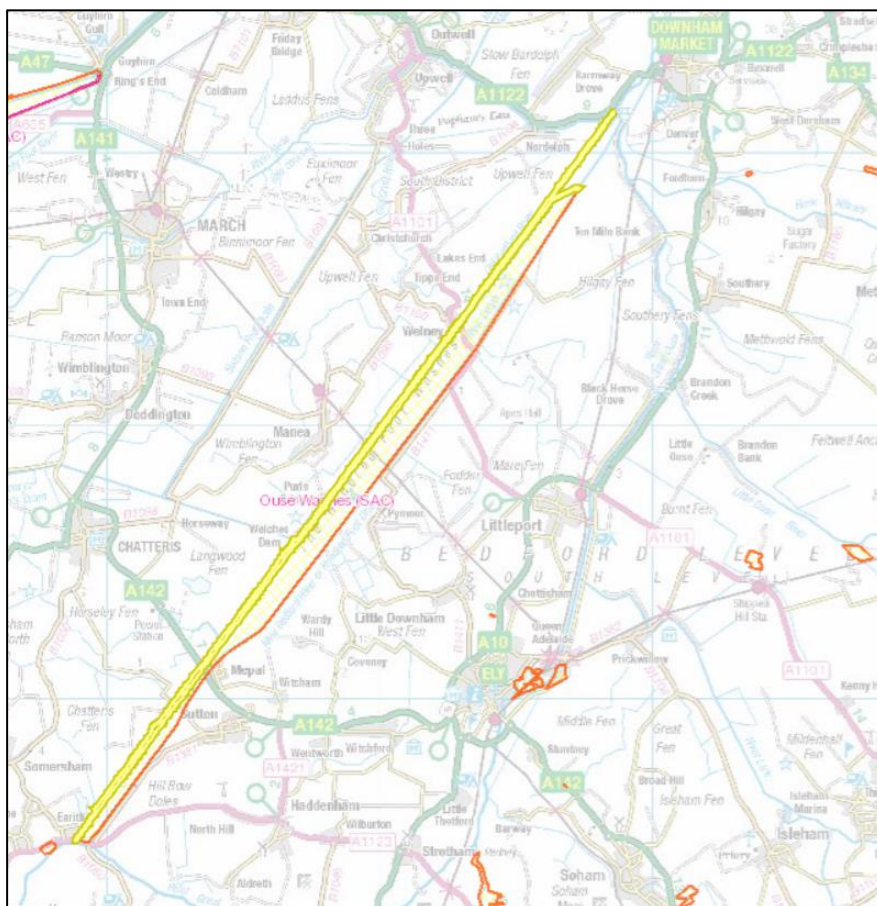
Specification

FEATURE MONITORING (SPINED LOACH *Cobitis taenia*) OF THE OUSE WASHES SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI) AND SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC) TO INFORM CURRENT CONDITION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACTS OF THE PREVAILING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Physical Context

Covering a total length of 63km and an area of approximately 311 hectares within the Fens National Character Area (NCA), the Ouse Washes SAC comprises two man-made drainage channels, running parallel to each other: the 33km Counter Drain/Old Bedford River (CDOB) and the 30km Old Bedford River/River Delph (OBRD).

The primary reason for the SAC designation of the Ouse Washes is for its representative populations of spined Loach *Cobitis taenia* in both channels.



The location of the SSSI and SAC in Cambridgeshire is illustrated in Figure 1 and the location of the channel features in the context of the washland flood storage reservoir is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1: Map of the Ouse Washes SSSI/SAC.

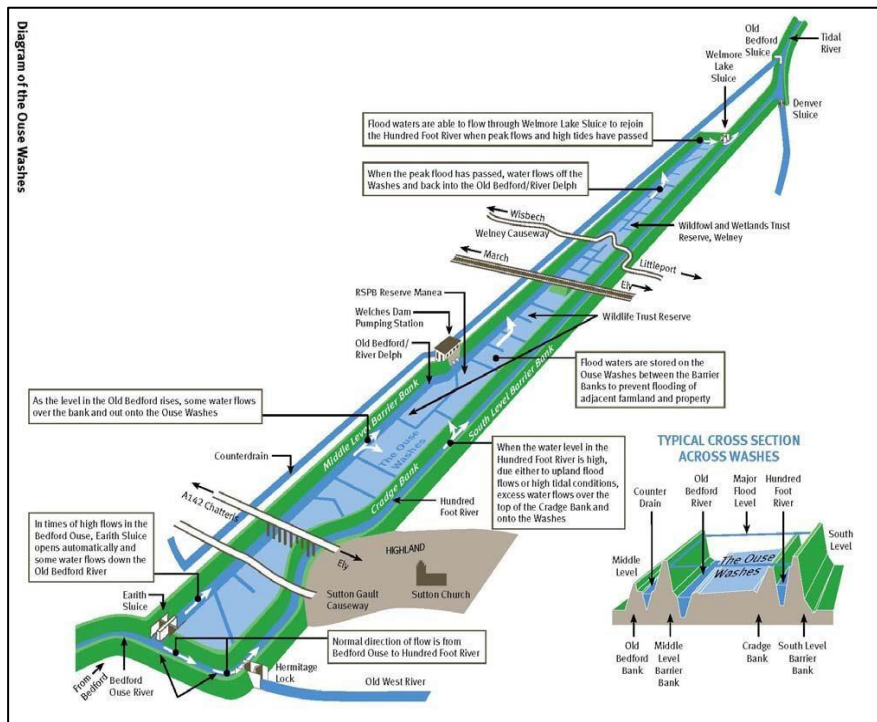


Figure 2: Ouse Washes schematic diagram illustrating how the Ouse Washes work as a flood storage reservoir showing the CDOB and OBRD along the west of the site.

The Ouse Washes play a major land drainage role by acting as a flood water storage area and the washland is thus subject to regular winter flooding from and subsequent drainage via the OBRD. In the summer months the area provides grazing and hay. The regular winter flooding and the continuance of traditional management of cattle grazing and hay cutting maintains the nature conservation value of the area.

The site is one of the country's few remaining areas of extensive washland habitat. It is of particular note due to the large numbers of wildlife and waders which it supports: for the large area of unimproved neutral grassland communities which it holds and for the richness of the aquatic fauna and flora within the associated watercourses. The capacity of the site to hold wintering and breeding waterfowl and waders is of international significance.

Designation

The Ouse Washes SSSI was first notified, under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) in 1984. Prior to this it was notified in 1955 under the 1949 Act recognising the importance of this area of land for wildlife.

In addition to being protected as a SSSI, the Ouse Washes has additional protections owing to its listing under the Ramsar Convention for being a wetland of international importance and designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EC Habitats Directive for spined Loach and Special Area of Conservation (SPA) under the Birds Directive for the number and variety of breeding and non-breeding (passage, autumn roosting and wintering) birds, many of which are now rare and threatened.

The Ouse Washes SAC represents spined Loach populations within the River Great Ouse catchment.

Copies of the SSSI and SAC citations can be found at the following web sites:

[Washes \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk/Washes)

[European Site Conservation Objectives for Ouse Washes SAC - UK0013011 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk/European%20Site%20Conservation%20Objectives%20for%20Ouse%20Washes%20SAC%20-%20UK0013011)

Current SSSI condition

The condition of all SSSIs in England, including the Ouse Washes, is assessed by Natural England against site-specific Conservation Objectives; Conservation Objectives have been produced for the Ouse Washes. A condition assessment was last undertaken in 2015 and is attached separately.

The Ouse Washes SAC comprises 2 SSSI units:

1. Unit 18 Old Bedford River/River Delph (OBRD)
2. Unit 20 Counter Drain/Old Bedford River (CDOB)

These units and their condition histories are detailed in Table 1. N.B. the watercourses both change names halfway down the system.

The CDOB, with its clear water and abundant macrophytes, is a particularly important part of the site where a healthy population of spined Loach is known to occur although the habitat is not thought to be optimal. Spined Loach are also present in the OBRD but the population here appears to be under greater environmental pressure than the population in the CDOB. In addition to surveying the two watercourses this RFQ asks for a survey of the ditch network across the wider Washes that is connected to the OBRD as it is thought likely that spined Loach is present here as well.

Table 1: Condition of spined Loach feature within the Ouse Washes SSSI. Monitoring carried out to Common Standards Monitoring specification (CSM).

SSSI Unit and Name	CSM 2009	CSM 2011	CSM 2016
18 Delph Drain (OBRD)	Probably declining at this point as the feature was favourable in 2001 but then declining by the time of the 2011 survey.	Declining due to low mean density of fish and low amount of young fish	Declining further due to even lower mean density and no young fish

20 Counter Drain (CDOB)	Favourable	Favourable	Favourable
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We would like to better understand the importance of the ditch network for the spined Loach population present throughout the washland feature, the entirety of which is in 'Unfavourable - No Change' condition due to a number of pressures. These long-standing pressures are inappropriate water levels at several times of the year, water pollution through excessive sediment and phosphate loading of the system and has led to a decline in the majority of breeding bird features, some wintering bird features and the loss of extent and quality of MG11/MG13 neutral grassland feature.

Therefore in addition to gathering data to inform a spined Loach feature condition assessment of the two channels that comprise the SAC we are also requesting a spined Loach monitoring of a representative sample of the ditch network within the Washes.

Prevailing environmental conditions at the Ouse Washes SSSI

We require the successful contractor to include an assessment of environmental requirements for spined Loach in the context of the operation of the Ouse Washes as a flood storage reservoir, to inform our understanding of the impacts of the flooding and drainage regime of the Ouse Washes on this species.

This should include recommendations for potential habitat mitigation measures which could also have multi-species benefits and which are appropriate within its use as a statutory flood storage reservoir.

In addition to SSSI condition information, documents to aid this assessment are the Ouse Washes Water Level Management Plan and RSPB's River Delph investigation reports.

Method and Timing of Survey

The surveys should be completed from September to October 2023, in accordance with the JNCC Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Freshwater Fauna. The protocol for spined Loach is detailed at pp 89-92:



[ONS Freshwater...](#)

It might be appropriate to survey the OBRD and washland ditches first as these are more likely to be impacted there is a flood event. 01 November is the date of the Earith drawmark change so no survey could be carried out on the OBRD after this date. A high level of biosecurity will be required at all times and best practice is to survey clean sites first moving on to contaminated sites later. Therefore ideally the CDOB would be surveyed first and then the OBRD and ditches, but if river and washland conditions prevent this a high level of biosecurity must be followed at all times to prevent transfer of INNS from the OBRD to the CDOB.

The suggested method of survey is an epibenthic sledge. Mitigation measures to reduce any habitat and species impacts caused by the survey methodology should be provided as part of the tender. Water vole are present throughout both watercourses and the washland ditches so measures to prevent disturbance must be included. In September and October the Washes are critically important for the large flocks of protected birds so it is imperative that survey work is carried out in a way that minimises disturbance, especially where the ditches are surveyed.

Contractors should provide all equipment needed to carry out the surveys, and detail in the tender document the biosecurity measures they intend to follow to prevent the introduction, spread and transfer off site and between the OBRD and CDOB of various invasive species.

Sample locations should be consistent with the 2015 monitoring survey, taking into account the revised CSM guidance, with full morphometric and habitat data entered onto an Excel spreadsheet as individual sample site locations with their map location given a 10 – figure grid ref and GPS location in 10 figures for each trawl location. e.g. Mark start of trawl position, for consistency across the surveys.

For the washland ditches the contractor should decide on a representative number of ditches to sample, taking into account the site constraints and timing.

The contractor must hold appropriate licenses/permits, hold SSSI consent and any other consents required prior to work commencing. The contractor must complete a FR2 form for using an instrument other than rod and line for removing fish that can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/permission-to-move-live-fish-to-or-from-a-fishery#get-authorisation-to-use-fishing-instruments-like-nets-and-traps>

The SSSI consent application must be informed by a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). As Natural England is requesting this survey, Natural England will produce the HRA, informed by the work methodology and discussions between the contractor, Natural England, Environment Agency, RSPB and WWT working as a group on this. Natural England will also liaise with the contractor and partners on the SSSI consent application.

Outputs

The contractor will produce a spined Loach feature assessment report which should include the following:

- i. Summary of findings
- ii. Methodology
- iii. Sample site description – description of each of the main sample areas of the site, including a representative sample of the ditches, noting observed management, pollution and all observational detail as per CSM favourable condition table attributes, including:
 - a. Coverage of submerged, emergent, floating and floating-leaved aquatic macrophytes and filamentous algae assessed at each sampling location using the DAFOR scale: Dominant (>75% coverage); Abundant (51–75%); Frequent (26–50%); Occasional (11–25%); Rare (<11%).
 - b. Coverage of each substratum type (bedrock/artificial, boulder, cobble, pebble, gravel, sand, silt, mud, clay) assessed at each sampling location using the DAFOR scale. Where the sediment is silt the depth should be measured.
- iv. The main element of the survey is to determine population structure/density; however we wish to understand the environmental conditions and relative fitness of individuals by adding the requirement to capture those ancillary environmental factors that drive population dynamics, including but not limited to:
 - water depth
 - water temperature
 - water flow (m³/s)
 - dissolved oxygen. Sampling is to be conducted at points throughout the water column (e.g. surface, midwater & bed) as previous WQ sampling has shown that there can be significant difference between the surface oxygen value and that at bed level
 - brief River Habitat Survey details (please use previous RHS data where available, no full new RHS required, just width/depth of channel, substrate type and silt/sediment depth, presence of algal and macrophyte cover, type of bankside cover (all as per categories in the 2015 survey))
 - sample channel x-sections (desirable)
 - a visual inspection for any sign of infections or damage etc

Please provide a separate cost for capturing these ancillary environmental factors.

v. Assess the condition of spined Loach populations across the SSSI in the context of the population attributes in the Favourable Condition Table following the methodology detailed in the 2015 JNCC guidance on freshwater site monitoring.

vi. Map and assess spatial variations in fish assemblage structure, densities, vegetation and substratum composition and depth, and water depth in ArcGIS.

vii. Tables of species for trawl locations within each sample location recording stop should be identified with a unique number and species recorded should be listed in the order of abundance, density, age structure and health as detailed in the 2015 JNCC guidance on freshwater site monitoring.

viii. Target Notes – each target note should be identifiable through its species name, the species allocated to each Target Note should be given together with a brief description, then each species recorded and its abundance, density, age structure and health etc.

ix. Map(s) - showing the location and extent of each sample site, labelled Target Note locations at a suitable scale to be proposed by the contractor.

x. Species list – to include all fish species encountered during the survey and invasive species (flora and fauna). Latin and common names should be given, the species to be listed in alphabetical order by Latin genus. Where pertinent, any associated relevant plant and invertebrate species can be included.

xi. Photographs of notable species marked on an appropriate scale map of the site.

xii. Evaluation and interpretation of the survey data including comparison to previous survey findings.

The report will be presented as A4-size, formatted as double sided. The digital maps/data/forms and the report should be provided via secure file transfer.

Project Team

Jaclyn Lake

SSSI Adviser for the Ouse Washes SSSI

West Anglia Area Team, Natural England

077899 44209

jaclyn.lake@naturalengland.org.uk

Dave Ottewell

Freshwater Fish and Fisheries Senior Specialist

Chief Scientist Directorate, Natural England

Justin Mould

Fisheries Technical Specialist

East Anglia (West), Environment Agency

Lesley Saint

Biodiversity Technical Specialist

Anglia Area, Environment Agency

Key Stakeholders:

RSPB and WWT, contacts tbc

Between them these two organisations own and manage most of the Washes for both breeding and non-breeding (wintering, passage) birds, some of which are highly protected species. You will need to liaise with both to inform/adapt survey methodologies as well as agreeing access with them and the EA

Supporting Documents attached

Common Standards Monitoring Condition Assessment of spined Loach, Ouse Washes SSSI. APEM. 2015.

Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Freshwater Fauna. 2015. JNCC

Ouse Washes Flood Storage Reservoir Management Statement for the Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Risk Management Maintenance Operations 2015 – 2024. 2014. Environment Agency.

Ouse Washes SSSI citation and Monitoring Specification

Ouse Washes SAC citation and Supplementary Advice document

Ouse Washes SPA citation

Ouse Washes Ramsar information sheet

Ouse Washes Natura 2000 Site Improvement Plan. 2014. Natural England.

River Delph studies by EA Justin Mould

RSPB's River Delph investigation reports 2019 -2020

Ouse Washes Water Level Management Plan 2002 and new draft 2023

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

	Date of issue of RFQ	Natural England	28-July-23 at 12:00 GMT
	Deadline for clarifications questions	Contractor	11-August-23 at 12:00 GMT
	Deadline for receipt of Quotation	Contractor	18-August-23 at 12:00 GMT
	Intended date of Contract Award	Natural England	25-August-23 at 12:00 GMT

Spined Loach Ouse Washes survey 2023	Start-up meeting with Project Team to consider existing data and agree details of approach (on Microsoft Teams)	Contractor	w/c 04 September 2023
	Desk based assessment and information gathering from stakeholders	Contractor	w/c 04 September 2023
	Finalising of HRA and SSSI notice of proposal	Contractor	w/c 18 September 2023
	Spined Loach Surveys	Contractor	September/October 2023
	Host Microsoft Teams meeting to present findings of surveys and draft recommendations management and any mitigation measures required.	Contractor	w/c 04 December 2023
	Draft Condition Assessment report	Contractor	w/c 15 January 2024
	Submission of final report	Contractor	no later than 29 February 2024

Jaclyn Lake 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.

If you are not familiar with the Ouse Washes SSSI we strongly advise that you arrange a visit to the site to thoroughly inspect the size, layout and nature of the site, the requirements of this monitoring survey and the site-specific constraints regarding accessing the watercourses and the Washes in general. It is highly likely that a small boat would be needed for surveying the Counter Drain/Old

Bedford River and the Old Bedford River/River Delph as both rivers are deep and waders will not be sufficient. Please see photographs at Appendix 1 for context.

In September and October the Washes are critically important for the large flocks of protected birds so it is imperative that survey work is carried out in a way that minimises disturbance, especially where the ditches are surveyed. The major landowners, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust will be able to guide as to best practice here and the successful contractor should plan the surveys with input from these land managers.

Appendix 1

Images 1-2: Counter Drain, Ouse Washes SSSI



Images 3-5: River Delph and washland ditches, Ouse Washes SSSI

3.

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4.

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5



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. Invoices may be submitted at 3 intervals: once the survey work is completed, the draft report is submitted and when the final report is submitted.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 6 months and to end no later than 29/02/2024. 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

Methodology (25% weighting)

Question 1) – Please provide a full proposal supported by attached documents as necessary demonstrating how you would go about meeting the specification for this contract?

Relevant Expertise (25% weighting)

Question 2) – Please provide details, specifically CVs of the team who will carry out the work of the contract?

Question 3) – Please provide 1 or 2 examples of where your organisation has carried out similar work.

Price (50% weighting)

Question 4) – In addition to a total fixed and firm price for the entire contract, please also detail out the subtotal cost for each output (as listed above in the Pricing Schedule), showing who will be working on them, the number of days/hrs being applied and the charge rate of each individual?

Health & Safety (Pass/Fail)

Question 5 – Working in and near water is integral to this assessment, including nocturnal surveying. Please provide a clear and structured proposal to

demonstrate your intended approach to health and safety and how you will ensure the requirements of legislation are met.

You should also ensure a risk assessment and appropriate mitigation is provided for the transfer of disease and non-native invasive species.

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.

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 via a Purchase Order.

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:

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.

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

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)	<p>If you have answered yes to question 2.1(a), please provide further details.</p> <p>Date of conviction, specify which of the grounds listed the conviction was for, and the reasons for conviction.</p> <p>Identity of who has been convicted</p> <p>If the relevant documentation is available electronically please provide the web address, issuing authority, precise reference of the documents.</p>	
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	(Yes / No)

	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?	
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

2.2(a)	<p>The detailed grounds for discretionary exclusion of an organisation are set out on this webpage, which should be referred to before completing these questions.</p> <p>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</p>	
2.2(b)	Breach of environmental obligations?	<p>(Yes / No)</p> <p>If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f)</p>
2.2(c)	Breach of social obligations?	<p>(Yes / No)</p> <p>If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f)</p>
2.2(d)	Breach of labour law obligations?	<p>(Yes / No)</p> <p>If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f)</p>

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 _____