**Request for Quotation Time in Nature at School Quantitative Evidence Scoping Project**

**Ref: C&N 2023 101 QE**

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| **Questions** | **Reply** |
| 1. How many stakeholders would you expect to  consult as part of this work? | We do not have a fixed suggestion for the number of stakeholders you will need to engage with. We would expect some consultation to be needed to determine which metrics should be assessed (i.e. improved wellbeing, improved attendance/behaviours etc) based on:  a. what data can practically be collected (this is likely to require some consultation with delivery practioners and potentially a small number of schools) and;  b. what data is seen as a priority decision making driver by other government departments and; c. which organisations could potentially facilitate access to schools as part of a preferred design? |
| 2. Do you have access to these stakeholders to aid recruitment? | We have access to and contacts for a range of government departments, local delivery partners and non-government organisations.  We can provide these contacts to the successfully contractor within an initiation meeting. |
| 3. What is the scale and nature of currently  available quantitative evidence in this space? | Much of the evidence from this country is qualitative but there are some quantitative studies too. There is evidence from the [*Natural Connections demonstration Project*](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpublications.naturalengland.org.uk%2Fpublication%2F6636651036540928&data=05%7C01%7CSusan.Lenaghan%40naturalengland.org.uk%7C896a8b668b7d4e5d3d6b08db98bb557d%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638271702586575662%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=9WEVX5t%2FN3TLm5pPXDaJoA6mBWiB3Mp%2BUGDcwc%2FIYCA%3D&reserved=0)and the Children and Nature programme (not yet published) – but will be available to successful contractor) that show positive impacts from time spent outside but there is no control group and other potential reasons for these impacts were not explored in the scope of the project. This Natural England evidence note provides an overview of current evidence [Links between natural environments, learning and health: evidence briefing - EIN063 (naturalengland.org.uk)](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpublications.naturalengland.org.uk%2Fpublication%2F5745607154335744&data=05%7C01%7CSusan.Lenaghan%40naturalengland.org.uk%7C896a8b668b7d4e5d3d6b08db98bb557d%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638271702586575662%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KPhZd10OqTCsT%2BtA1ZGV4e4hwOBizDJOUn8c5cH%2BdR0%3D&reserved=0) |
| 4. Is this data something that you have access to or is there an expectation that a supplier will find it? | All existing Natural England reports are available on our publications catalogue. In addition, we will be able to provide unpublished reports from the Children and Nature Programme. We do not have specific access to other academic studies and data. |
| 5. Please can you clarify the payment schedule for the scoping project, as this is not indicated in Clause 3 of the contract. *e.g., 50% upfront, 50% on completion.* | *We would expect to make payment based on milestones within the project (i.e. x% at first draft, x% at completion). These milestones and percentages would be negotiable with the successful contractor.* |
| 6. What is the budget for the broader project? A large scale RCT will probably be costly as it will involve many schools. In order for us to propose the best way forward, an idea of the budget for delivery would be useful. | *Part of the purpose of this project is to determine roughly what budget might be needed for a experimental design project which would enable us to move the evidence for time spent in nature forward. As a government organisation we have to consider value for money in all of our expenditure. Whilst the cost of different methodologies will not be the driving decision maker about which one to pursue it would be useful to understand roughly the cost implications of any methodologies considered. This would also enable us to understand how much money we would need to secure to enable the work to be completed. We do not expect numbers to be presented in pounds and pence, more an indication of magnitude of cost of each methodology. i.e. for statistical confidence a, sample size a is needed which would cost ~£50k; for statistical confidence b, sample size b is needed which would cost ~£250k.* |
| 7. The documentation references a preference to use Randomised Control Trials (RCT) AND references research methodologies that do not rely on a new intervention.   1. Please can you clarify these points. For example, is the ‘preference’ for using RCT to be based on the existing intervention design and its parameters, AND/OR that an RCT be used in part, and that a second methodology be recommended for those institutions already engaged in the outdoor learning programme? | *The focus of this project is build robustness into the evidence that already exists on the topic. A range of projects demonstrate qualitatively the benefits of time outside in nature for a range of children’s outcomes from mental and physical health to behaviour in the classroom and attendance at school. However no large scale studies with experimental designs have yet been able to consider outcomes for schools who routinely include time in nature as part of their school day, versus those that do not.  The aim of this work is to understand what is needed to address this gap. The* [*HMT\_Magenta\_Book.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)*](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F879438%2FHMT_Magenta_Book.pdf&data=05%7C01%7CMartin.Gilchrist%40naturalengland.org.uk%7Cc6a19183113b4ac1ff9608db9f2838ca%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638278767316591209%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=HgMsI3isxAhgtwmcewts%2Bhh3ms10FrEbbb6Nz3F1L1Y%3D&reserved=0) *provides guidance on RCTs and the use of comparison groups. We want to advance our understanding of outcomes from time in nature at school through the use of experimental design – RCT’s being the accepted most robust form of experimental design. One of the challenges we recognise though is that every school is different with a different set of physical conditions, socioeconomic backgrounds, links to community, intake etc, we would expect a methodology to include some clustering of similar schools for whom the background situations and delivery are alike, so that then a contrast could be made between outcomes with and without time in nature.* |
| 8. Please provide clarification on the ‘outdoor learning programmes’ which already exists. For example, its design, parameters, and requirements, how much variation is permitted between centres (in deploying the programme), which metrics are currently available relative to the deployment and execution of such programmes, as well as participant and school information. | *There are a host of existing outdoor learning/time in nature initiatives that run, including but by no means exclusively Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Mark awards, Forest School Association training, John Muir award, Green Trees award, Eco-schools as well as programmes by the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, TCV, Groundworks and many more. Part of the challenge in assessing the impact of time spent in nature is that these schemes all have slightly different emphasis, approaches and geographies. We have good relationships with a number of the above organisations and would be able to facilitate communication with them so the successful contractor could develop an understanding of what information they hold and how it could be best used.* |
| 9. The RFQ references a review of the quantitative evidence currently available (e.g., wellbeing, physical health, behaviour). Does the existing data follow uniform format across centres (e.g., as illustrated in Table 10 of the Nature Friendly Schools (NFS) Learning Report). If this is not the case, there often exists large variability between schools in how such metrics are gathered and measured. To what extent are the methodologies for such measures documented from the existing evidence pool? | *The projects that have run previously have not been standardised and the evidence they have collected has not been consistent, however common themes around behaviour, physical health, attendance etc do emerge. We would expect the successful contractor to review the evidence that is available, consider the priority evidence needs and then design a methodology that would focus on one, or a small number of metrics. Negotiations will be needed to ensure the balance is struck to ensure the proposed methodology is able to answer the questions most needed by the sector and the practicalities of accessing/collecting such data.* |
| 10. Can you confirm if you’d like the supplier to design one methodology or identify/suggest a few different methodologies? (The RFQ on pages 8 and 9 infers both and we’d just like to clarify which it is) | *The focus of this project is build robustness into the evidence that already exists on the topic. A range of projects demonstrate qualitatively the benefits of time outside in nature for a range of children’s outcomes from mental and physical health to behaviour in the classroom and attendance at school. However no large scale studies with experimental designs have yet been able to consider outcomes for schools who routinely include time in nature as part of their school day, versus those that do not.  The aim of this work is to understand what is needed to address this gap. If successful it may be that your assessment considers that only one methodology is appropriate or that there are several with different pros and cons – either way we would expect to see that assessment and understand what recommendations are based on.* |
| 11. Page 9 (first para) – can you clarify what you mean by ‘costed’ methodologies? | *We do not expect numbers to be presented in pounds and pence, more an indication of magnitude of cost of each methodology. i.e. for statistical confidence a, sample size a is needed which would cost ~£50k; for statistical confidence b, sample size b is needed which would cost ~£250k.* |
| 12. Page 9 – can you please clarify what your understanding of a Randomised Control Trial is? | *The focus of this project is build robustness into the evidence that already exists on the topic. The* [*HMT\_Magenta\_Book.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)*](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F879438%2FHMT_Magenta_Book.pdf&data=05%7C01%7CMartin.Gilchrist%40naturalengland.org.uk%7Cc6a19183113b4ac1ff9608db9f2838ca%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638278767316591209%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=HgMsI3isxAhgtwmcewts%2Bhh3ms10FrEbbb6Nz3F1L1Y%3D&reserved=0) *provides guidance on RCTs and the use of comparison groups. We want to advance our understanding of outcomes from time in nature at school through the use of experimental design – RCT’s being the accepted most robust form of experimental design. One of the challenges we recognise though is that every school is different with a different set of physical conditions, socioeconomic backgrounds, links to community, intake etc, we would expect a methodology to include some clustering of similar schools for whom the background situations and delivery are alike, so that then a contrast could be made between outcomes with and without time in nature.* |