Clarifications to Bidder’s Questions:

NRN Engagement and workshop facilitation

**Q1) What are Natural England’s preferred locations for the face-to-face meetings?**

A1) We would like the face-to-face NRN management group meeting to be in a central/good transport linked location, possible suggestions include Manchester and Birmingham.

The workshop locations will be tailored to the partnership groups we are working with, these locations are currently to be confirmed.

**Q2) What are the anticipated numbers of participants for each online and each face-to-face event in the programme?**

A2) The online NRN management group meeting will be approximately 40 participants. The face-to-face NRN management group meeting is likely to be 50-60 participants.

The workshops will likely be slightly smaller in numbers, between 20-30 participants.

**Q3) What stage of development is NRN? Are you already building the network and creating investment proposals or is this a ground-up project?**

A3) The NRN management group is an established group that has already been meeting approximately every 6-8 weeks for the last 2 years therefore the online meeting and face to face meeting are sessions to review progress and plan next steps with the group.

The NRN workshops will be with partnership groups that are looking to take the next steps in terms of creating a vision and implementation plan for nature recovery.

**Q4) Can you tell us how many delivery partners have signed up to the NRN to date?**

A4) The NRN management group membership is listed on gov.uk [**Nature Recovery Network - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network)

**Q5) With regard to the requirement to: Develop a repository of knowledge/collaboration platform for the NRN partnership to use to facilitate conversations, share knowledge and collaborate on partnership projects. Is the expectation that the successful proposer will support the technical work to create the platform itself or will the focus be to advise on the content, structure and modes of collaboration on existing platforms?**

A5) The former - we have some examples of successful existing platforms and have developed some of the content already therefore we would be expecting the successful proposer to support the creation of the platform itself.

**Q6) Timing - Why is the timescale for this so compressed?**

**With a 22 January Start and 29 March End it is essentially only 9 weeks. (and as 29 March is a bank holiday it is actually delivery by 28th I assume)**

**Is this being driven by a requirement to complete the spend within the NE budget year?**

A6) Yes, we are required to complete the spend within the NE budget year. We also want to facilitate a NRN management group face to face in the first quarter to aid further planning and setting up the group for the rest of the year.

**Q7) NRN Partner Availability in early March**

**From our knowledge of the general availability of local authority and other NRN related partners in that time period – approaching the public sector year end, I think it is likely that squeezing the 3 trial workshops in to what is likely to end up being just the first 1-2 weeks of March is going to be problematic if you want all the right partners to engage.**

A7) The exception might be if you already have the 3 NRNs and their key partners engaged and on board, and expecting workshops to occur in those 2 weeks, but this is not stated in the RFQ.

**Q8) How many trial workshops? 1, 2, or 3?**

**The RFQ states that there will be 1-3 Workshops with actual NRN partnerships. This makes estimating problematic, as each of these workshops is going to need some pre-engagement with the NRN group and then the workshop itself. There is a significant resource difference between delivering 1 such workshop and doing 3.**

**Q9) Are the Trial Workshops expected to be online or are they in-person?**

**The RFQ is not specific about this, whereas it is explicit about the two NRN management group events. It matters because**

**a. The planning process and design will be slightly different depending on the format**

**b. If they are to be in-person, this will make question 2 (above) even more pertinent)**

A8,9,10) Hopefully this answers Q8, 9 and 10 - We have several potential partnership groups in mind to trial these workshops with, there are still some variables on definite numbers/locations therefore we suggest you cost/plan for delivering 1 face to face workshop and then we can add further locations if there is capacity.

**Q10) The RFQ notes that for the NRN Management Group face-to-face in March the services should include “supporting and upskilling the NRN team in facilitation”**

**We do this sort of delivery and upskilling work regularly, but it would be helpful if you could expand on what NE are hoping to achieve in this regard.**

A10 cont.) The partnership team have already received facilitation training however this support would help the team build confidence and take the next steps in terms of planning and delivering the NRN workshops to ensure they achieve the best outcomes for the partnerships we are working with.

**Q11) How does this relate – if at all – to other NE initiatives which are also planning to design and run engagement workshops in the same period with a similar notion of a workshop template for strategic planning with partners – notably two in which**

**a. we are involved in as the workshop designer and**

**b. which have already noted the overlap and possible tie in with LRNS planning:**

**These are:**

**- The Priority Places initiative under Nick Dales**

**- The Health Wellbeing, Nature and Sustainability Tool development under Tim Sunderland/Gemma Sharman – where one of the groups has already suggested they might want to use the HWNS workshop as a vehicle for engagement on their LNRS/NRN forward planning**

A11) In terms of the other workshops that are taking place/being planned we will be working with these teams closely. The workshops that we are planning are aiming to bring partners together to produce a vision for the partnership and then discuss/plan how this could actually be implemented, so it aims to be an overarching workshop that will bring in and streamline all these different tools and mechanisms to deliver nature recovery.

**Q12) Are you asking the successful supplier to recommend and design the appropriate information structure, content and information governance for a collaboration platform of your choice (e.g Microsoft Teams, Zoho or similar), potentially leveraging some or all of the content you have already created, and advising on the migration of suitable content or is it your intention that the successful supplier would commit to a software project that creates a new collaboration platform for NRN? An initiative of this sort would normally include requirements analysis, business and technical architecting, programming and/or the customisation of software assets, implementation, testing, training and release management. It would be very helpful to us to be clear on the scope of your expectation in this respect.**

A 12) It would be selecting the best software / collaboration platform for the NRN and ensuring it is set up to effectively support knowledge sharing and discussions between partners  – for example we have seen Basecamp used effectively by the Scottish Nature Pioneers.

**Q13) What level of administration is expected of the consultants? For example will Natural England be inviting participants to the meetings & workshops?**

A13) The NRN NE team will invite participants to the meetings and workshops, however we would expect the contractor to work with the NRN team to organise the agenda/flow of the meetings and workshops.

**Q14) Who do you anticipate will be booking the venues for the meetings & workshops?**

A14) We expect the contractors to book the venues meetings and the workshops. We are happy to do both of these but will need to include a price for this within our submission. In regard of the repository of knowledge / collaboration platform:

**Q15) Are there any specific ideas on what you wish to see facilitated in terms of collaboration at this stage or are you expecting this to emerge during the course of the project?**

A15) We have some ideas, to give a bit more detail we would hope that the contractor would be selecting the best software / collaboration platform for the NRN and ensuring it is set up to effectively support knowledge sharing and discussions between partners  – for example we have seen Basecamp used effectively by the Scottish Nature Pioneers.

**Q16) Who do they anticipate dealing with the day to day management of the platform beyond the immediate project? Will this be done in house (NE) by technical or non-technical people or else by the contractor?**

A16) In the initial start-up / onboarding phase for approx. 50 partners we would expect the platform to be managed by the contractor but this would be handed over to the NRN NE team at the end of the contract, we hope it would be ‘self-regulating’ in the future.

**Q17) Contracts Finder says the max budget is 20k including VAT.  Please can you confirm if this is correct and if not provide the indicative budget range?**

A17) Yes, the max budget is £20k including VAT.

**Q18) Does the budget need to include the venue hire and refreshments for an NRN event for 60 people (number based on the clarification answers from the earlier call) and separately 35 for the location workshop?**

A18) Yes, I would suggest keeping the venue hire section of the contract separate to the project management/facilitation elements (i.e. show separate costs and then combined total) as there is a possibility that we may be able to use partner venues at a reduced rate so then we can evaluate/compare the facilitation elements of the contract delivery more easily.

Q19) Does the budget need to include the licence fee for the repository platform?

A19) Yes, but this could be just for a short duration e.g. 3-6months to allow us to trial the platform and onboard our management group partners.

**Q20) Given you want upskilling in event design, how long did you envisage the workshop planning sessions to be?**

A20) This probably depends on your techniques for designing sessions. Ideally the outputs should be a set of repeatable workshops, with slide decks. The upskilling and material will therefore allow the NRN team to be able to repeat this process for setting up/designing the session, delivering the content and material, and evaluating the workshops going forward.

**Q21) What kind of reporting do you envisage for the location workshop and the NRN workshop?**

A21) Again this will depend on your methods. In terms of the actual workshop as supposed to the process -  items we would like to be recorded in some format are the engagement within the workshop i.e. a report that captures activities, content produced, any pertinent input and actions. Reporting/evaluation of the process again depends on methods for evaluation and reporting, ideally it will be built into the design process and therefore should not require much additional work. Ideally, we would like support to carry out pilots of each developed workshop format, evaluate and improve the developed process, and then develop plans for future implementation of the workshop format.