



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Bidder Pack

Procurement Specific Requirements

Prevalence of trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) in the environment and the effectiveness of current water treatment processes.

Procurement Reference Number: C26620

October 2024

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Section 1: The Invitation

This procurement is being carried out by Defra group Commercial in accordance with the Open Procedure as set out in the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR) on behalf of the Seasonal Labour and Worker Welfare, Food Security and Co-ordination team - Agri-Food Chain Directorate - Defra.

The Bidder Pack comes in **two parts**.

The first part, The Core Requirements, provides details of the General Requirements, Government Transparency Agenda and Government Priorities.

The second part, the Procurement Specific Requirements, provides details of the Specification Requirements, Terms and Conditions of Contract, Evaluation Methodology, Procurement Timetable and Definitions.

The tendering process seeks to determine the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT). The Authority will evaluate the Tenders using the tender evaluation criteria and weightings listed in Section 4, Evaluation Methodology.

The Opportunity

This opportunity is advertised by Defra group Commercial on behalf of the Drinking Water Inspectorate team - Defra.

Quotation Submission

Details of the Qualification, Technical and Commercial requirements can be located through the Atamis e-tendering portal (<https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome>).

Executive Summary

Research aims - Trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) is an organofluorine compound. There is current discussion around its classification as a pesticide metabolite, or a per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS). For the purpose of this research project, TFA will not be classified and will be referenced as an organofluorine compound.

This project will demonstrate the prevalence of TFA in the environment, focussing on risks in drinking water catchments. Furthermore, the study will provide a comparison between raw and treated water sources to give an indication on the effect of current water treatment processes on the removal or degradation of TFA and the potential risks of exposure to drinking water supplies.

Procurement Plan and Timetable

The timetable below is subject to change from time to time as notified by the Authority. All Tenderers will be informed via the Authority's <https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome>.

Procurement Activity	Anticipated Date	
Publish Contracts Finder and FTS Notice, and Bidder Pack	11 th October 2024	
Clarification deadline	Date	Time
	11 th November 2024	14:00 GMT
Bidder Pack / ITT response date	Date	Time
	18 th November 2024	12:00 GMT
Compliance Checks	18 th November 2024	
Evaluation	18 th November 2024 – 25 th November 2024	
Moderation Meeting	27 th November 2024	
Produce Contract Award Report and Draft Feedback/Award Letters	04 th December 2024	

Approval of Contract Award Report	06 th December 2024
Issue Notification of Intention to Award letters	06 th December 2024
Discretionary Standstill Period	N/A
Self-Declaration Due Diligence	TBC
Finalise Contract and obtain approvals (if required)	13 th December 2024
Contract award / contract issued	20 th December 2024
Contract Start Date	03rd January 2025
Publish Contract Award Notices and Redacted Contract	03 rd January 2025
Handover	03 rd January 2025
Service Commencement Date	03 rd January 2025
Contract End Date	30th June 2026

All timescales are set using a 24-hour clock and when referring to “days” it means calendar days unless otherwise specified (for example, working days).

Variant Tenders

The Authority shall not accept variant Tenders.

For the avoidance of doubt, if the Authority has reserved a right to waive a requirement in this Bidder Pack and chooses to exercise such discretion, the Tender will not be considered a variant Tender.

Abnormally Low Tenders or Pricing Anomalies

If the Authority considers your Tender to appear abnormally low, an initial assessment will be undertaken using a comparative analysis of the pricing proposals received from all Tenderers [and the Authority’s valuation of the procurement]. If that assessment indicates that your Tender is abnormally low the Authority will request a written explanation of your Tender, or of those parts of your Tender which the Authority considers contribute to your Tender being abnormally low. The Authority reserves the right to reject your Tender if the response does not satisfactorily account for the low level of price or costs proposed.

The assessment of abnormally low tenders will be undertaken strictly in accordance with Regulation 69 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which outlines how abnormally low tenders must be assessed and the circumstances in which the contracting authority can reject the tender.

Pricing Anomalies

If in the opinion of the Authority your Tender contains any pricing anomalies (for example apparent discrepancies between the financial submission and other parts of your response) the Authority may seek clarification. If the clarification response indicates that the pricing anomaly was the result of a clear and obvious error, in the interest of fairness the resulting change will be taken into consideration. If the clarification response results in a change to the initial tendered Commercial Response and price, it will not be taken into account.

Section 2: The Specification of Requirements

1. The Authority's Priorities

The Authority is the UK Government Department responsible for the environment, food and farming and rural affairs.

Within England, Defra are responsible for improving and protecting the environment. We aim to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. We also support our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries.

Further information on our responsibilities and how we are structured can be found on our website.

[Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Responsibilities:

- improve the environment through cleaner air and water, minimised waste, and thriving plant and terrestrial and marine wildlife.
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon storage in the agricultural, waste, peat and tree planting sectors to help deliver net zero.
- reduce the likelihood and impact of flooding and coastal erosion on people, businesses, communities and the environment.

increase the sustainability, productivity and resilience of the agriculture, fishing, food and drink sectors, enhance biosecurity at the border and raise animal welfare standards.

2. Background

Fluorinated organic chemicals have a wide range of industrial uses including medicine, agriculture and household products. Many of these chemicals are released directly into the environment as part of their use or lost through fugitive emissions. What makes these chemicals so persistent in the environment, is the strength of the carbon-fluorine bond (-CF₃). The carbon-fluorine bond is resistant to degradation in the environment which results in the release of TFA as a terminal residue, following environmental degradation of the parent materials.

TFA is a very persistent and mobile contaminant which is present ubiquitously in the environment¹. TFA is a short chain perfluorinated chemical which has not been classified as of toxicological concern². However, there is ongoing and increasing emissions of TFA from anthropogenic sources, and its prevalence in the environment and risk to drinking water supplies needs to be better understood.

A recent research project, conducted by the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA) estimated that pesticides have the highest potential release of TFA into water bodies, which has been estimated at 434 tonnes per year³. In addition, the recorded TFA levels in rainwater in Germany have increased fourfold in two decades⁴. Although this information has been concluded using data from Germany, it is reasonable to assume that the situation is similar in other European countries, and the UK too.

There are not currently any regulations in place to identify and reduce the concentrations of TFA in the environment or drinking water supplies in England and Wales. However, the UBA has set a human health-based guideline value of 60 µg/L for TFA in drinking water and a “precautionary measure” of 10 µg/L, which is based on liver toxicity⁵.

This project will provide a comparison between raw and treated water sources to give an indication on the effect of current water treatment processes on the removal or degradation of TFA and will consider the risk to drinking water quality.

Policy and Regulatory Context

The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016⁶ (as amended) in England and the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2018⁷ in Wales specify that water companies must provide wholesome water to consumers. Public water supplies should be free of any substance at a concentration or value which would constitute a potential danger to human health.

¹ Environmental Science: Processes & Impacts (2021) Insufficient evidence for the existence of natural trifluoroacetic acid. The Royal Society of Chemistry. Issue 11, 2021. Joudan, Shira, De Silva, Amila O., Young, Cora J. SN:2050-7887.

² USEPA (2009) Long-chain Perfluorinated Chemical (PFCs) Action Plan. Washington DC: United States Environmental Protection Agency p24.

³ UBA (2023): Trifluoacetat (TFA): Grundlagen für eine effektive Minimierung schaffen - Räumliche Analyse der Eintragspfade in den Wasserkreislauf.

⁴ 8 Freeling, F.; Behringer, D.; Heydel, F.; Scheurer, M.; Ternes, T. A.; Nödler, K. Trifluoroacetate in Precipitation: Deriving a Benchmark Data Set. Environ. Sci. Technol. 2020, 54 (18), 11210–11219.

⁵ Michael Garry (2024) German Chemicals Office Plans EU Proposal Linking TFA to Reproductive Toxicity [Online]. Available: <https://naturalrefrigerants.com/german-chemicals-office-plans-eu-proposal-linking-tfa-to-reproductive-toxicity/> [Accessed 31.07.24]

⁶ The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016

⁷ The Water Supply (Water Quality) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 (Wales)

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) as the drinking water quality regulator for England and Wales would like to further understand the treatment efficacy for TFA contaminants in drinking water supplies in the UK. This research will provide an understanding of the prevalence of TFA in the environment and the efficacy of current water treatment processes to support the completion of drinking water risk assessments

Detailed Requirements

The objectives are to:

1. Review available data and existing research outcomes from the UK water industry, Environment Agency and devolved environmental agencies for the prevalence of TFA in the environment and drinking water supplies. Conduct a literature review of existing analytical methodology across England, Wales, and abroad to develop an appropriate laboratory method for the study.
2. Design an appropriate sampling schedule to ensure conclusions can be drawn and seasonality is represented.
3. Undertake sampling in England and Wales to understand prevalence and concentrations of TFA in different drinking water catchments. A well distributed data set is required. Any data gaps identified in objective 1 should be filled by sampling, by the completion of objective 3.
4. Compare concentrations of TFA in raw water and treated water samples, where TFA concentrations in raw water are highest, to give an indication of the efficacy of existing treatment processes and the potential risks of exposure in drinking water supplies.
5. Assess the environmental catchment and hypothesise whether the prevalence of TFA in the environment has a causal link to the concentration in raw water. Assess which factors contribute to the risk of high or low concentrations of TFA in raw water.
6. Report the findings of the study in a final report.

Methodology

The detailed methodology is for the contractor to develop, however the following issues must be addressed;

Objective 1 – Undertake a review of available data to complete a desk top study on prevalence of TFA in the environment across England, Wales and abroad. The review should include literature sources where appropriate and use suitable databases and search facilities to be able to summarise and report the current knowledge on the prevalence of

TFA. This needs to include areas where concentrations may be higher, indicating any 'hotspot' areas. Conduct a literature review of existing analytical methodologies across England, Wales, and abroad to develop an appropriate analysis for the study.

Objective 2 – Design an appropriate sampling schedule to ensure conclusions can be drawn and seasonality is represented. Following the completion of objective 1, it is assumed gaps in data, potential precursors and potential 'hotspot' areas will have been identified. It is anticipated a maximum of 300 samples will be taken over a 12-month period. This equates to approximately 12 sampling points to be sampled, fortnightly.

Objective 3 – Undertake sampling of raw and treated waters across England and Wales. Sampling will follow the sampling schedule designed in objective 2. **Note:** there must be a **minimum** of 12 samples per sample point with a good distribution of data.

Objective 4 – Evaluate the efficacy of current water treatment processes in the removal of TFA from drinking water supplies by comparing raw and treated water samples. Consider the most common treatment mechanisms used across the England and Wales, process limitations and ensure testing is completed using a robust approach to enable statistical analysis.

Objective 5 – Assess the environmental catchment, using the available data and existing research to identify the most and least impactful precursors. Examples including, but not limited to, are groundwater age, aquifer type and groundwater flows. Generate hypotheses to understand the wider learning of TFA concentrations in the environment to help understand if a causal link is present between precursors such as historic and current land uses, surface water and raw water concentrations. Understand if there is a link between these precursors and the level of risk associated with them. Determine any contributing factors in the environment that may affect TFA concentrations.

Objective 6 – Provide a final report that should be completed using an evidence-based interpretation of the results gathered in objectives 1 to 3. Ensure the report includes study limitations and recommendations for future research work on TFA removal in water treatment.

Deliverables

- 1) Completion of objectives 1 & 2 – Interim Report 1
- 2) Completion of objective 3 & 4 – Interim Report 2
- 3) Final report covering all work objectives and findings.

Outputs and Timetable

It is envisaged the project will take approximately 18 months to complete. This is dependent on the cost of sampling (for TFA only), the number of samples taken and the time to complete the project.

The successful bidder will need to set up an inception meeting with the Defra Project Officer to discuss the project and produce a note of the meeting and any actions arising.

The Defra Project Officer must be kept informed by email at bimonthly intervals on the progress of this contract. This should be done electronically via email, where a summary progress report (no longer than 4 pages A4, 11-point Arial font and in Microsoft Word format) should be submitted to the Defra Project Officer.

A written report is required on completion of each of the deliverable described above. This should fully describe the progress of the project and its findings to that stage.

A draft final report must be submitted to the Defra Project Officer two months prior to the end of the contract (timing depends upon the length of contract). Comments on the draft final report will be provided to the contractor within one month of receipt of the draft. An electronic copy of the final report must also be provided in Word format, and for the final agreed version to also be in PDF format that is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (known as [WCAG 2.1](#)).

Publication

It is Defra policy to publish all final project reports and the report from this project will be made available on both the Defra and DWI websites. Defra expects research contractors to publish their findings in scientific or industry journals or conference proceedings. The DWI will reserve the right to determine if and how results should be published.

Programme of Work

Contractors should describe in detail how they will deliver the objectives, research aim(s) and associated costs. Contractors should provide a timetable for the work outlined above and include a Gantt chart with key milestones in their proposals.

In each case the breakdown of costs must list separately staff costs, travel and subsistence, materials, sub-contracts and reports. Travel and subsistence costs must be at Civil Service standards rates or less as detailed below. This information must be provided in respect of

any sub-contractors who will be employed for the purposes of this contract. The contractor must also state whether VAT is applicable.

Bids will be assessed against this specification. For guidance on applying for this competition please read the Tender Guidance note included in this Competition Pack. The standard terms and conditions for Defra research projects are also included in this Competition pack of which this specification forms a part.

References

Environmental Science: Processes & Impacts (2021) Insufficient evidence for the existence of natural trifluoroacetic acid. The Royal Society of Chemistry. Issue 11, 2021. Joudan, Shira, De Silva, Amila O., Young, Cora J. SN:2050-7887.

USEPA (2009) Long-chain Perfluorinated Chemical (PFCs) Action Plan. Washington DC: United States Environmental Protection Agency p24.

UBA (2023): Trifluoracetat (TFA): Grundlagen für eine effektive Minimierung schaffen - Räumliche Analyse der Eintragspfade in den Wasserkreislauf.

8 Freeling, F.; Behringer, D.; Heydel, F.; Scheurer, M.; Ternes, T. A.; Nödler, K. Trifluoroacetate in Precipitation: Deriving a Benchmark Data Set. Environ. Sci. Technol. 2020, 54 (18), 11210–11219.

Michael Garry (2024) German Chemicals Office Plans EU Proposal Linking TFA to Reproductive Toxicity [Online]. Available: <https://naturalrefrigerants.com/german-chemicals-office-plans-eu-proposal-linking-tfa-to-reproductive-toxicity/> [Accessed 31.07.24]
The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016

The Water Supply (Water Quality) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (Wales)

3. Payment Schedule

Milestone and payment schedule up to the bidders based on the deliverables given above.

Payment will be done by invoicing for progress of tasks in line with the project milestones agreed with the successful bidder following award of the contract

4. Accessibility

As a public body, any product that is published within the public domain must comply with the accessibility legislation. Please ensure that where the end product is to be published, reference is made to the following requirement which can be found here.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/publishing-accessible-documents>

5. Anonymised Recruitment

- Anonymised recruitment removes the candidate's personal details from their application. The most common items include name, age, employee number, email address, home address, nationality, and immigration details. This supports diversity in the workforce. It helps to create a more level playing field in the assessment process.
- Where procuring an opportunity that requires the provision of CVs, anonymised recruitment should be the default position.

6. Governance

Within Defra, the project will be assigned a designated contract manager, who will be the regular point of contact with the Supplier.

Bidders should identify individuals who will manage the research and nominate a representative for day-to-day contact with the DWI project officer.

The successful supplier will be required to attend an inception meeting. This can be held in DWI offices, in central London, or remotely which can be arranged with the DWI project officer. The supplier will provide the minutes for this meeting.

The successful supplier should keep in touch with the DWI Project Officer, normally by a means of email, and must notify the DWI Project Officer immediately of any delays with the project.

7. Quality Assurance

Evidence used in preparing the final report will be collected, processed and published with rigour and that appropriate quality assurance (QA) processes are in place, and embedded, within the contracting organisation. The Contractor will provide DWI/ Defra with relevant

assurances around QA procedures and/or certifications from recognised standards providers (e.g. ISO). DWI/Defra will review and assess quality assurance by internal and external peer review before final approval of outputs presented by the Contractor.

8. Travel and Subsistence

All Travel and Subsistence should be in line with Defra's Travel and Subsistence Policy. Claims should always be supported by valid receipts for audit purposes and must not exceed any of the stated rates below. Should the stated rate be exceeded, Defra reserve the right to reimburse only up to the stated rate.

Rail Travel All Journeys

Standard class rail should be used unless a clear business case demonstrating value for money can be presented. This includes international rail journeys by Eurostar and other international and overseas rail operators.

Mileage Allowance

Mileage allowance	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Private cars and vans – no public transport rate*	45p	25p
Private cars and vans – public transport rate	25p	25p
Private motorcycles	24p	24p
Passenger supplement	5p	5p
Equipment supplement**	3p	3p
Bicycle	20p	20p

*NB the 'no public transport rate' for car and van travel can only be claimed where the use of a private vehicle for the journey is essential e.g., on grounds of disability or where there

is no practical public transport alternative. If the use of the vehicle is not essential the 'public transport rate' should be claimed.

** Under HMRC rules this expense is taxable.

UK Subsistence

Location	Rate
London (Bed and Breakfast)	£160 per night + £20 buffer
UK Other (Bed and Breakfast)	£100 per night for all other locations +£20 buffer

Section 3: Terms and Conditions of Contract

The Terms and Conditions of Contract for this procurement are DgC standard conditions of contract for research and development using a R&D Order Form.

[Research and development terms and conditions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

The Terms and Conditions are split into Core Terms and Contracting Authority Terms within the Annexes / Schedules, and details of the legal priority are similarly within the contract's Annexes/Schedules.

The contract will run until **30 June 2026**.

Suggested Changes to Conditions of Contract

Tenderers may raise clarification questions relating to the amendment of contract terms (Appendix B) during the clarification period only, as specified in the Timetable, if it can be demonstrated that there is a legal or statutory reason why they cannot be accepted. Where a legal or statutory reason cannot be substantiated the Authority has the right to reject the proposed changed.

Such requests must follow the Clarifications Sought by the Tenderer process set out in the Core Requirements element of this Bidder Pack.

Section 4: Evaluation Methodology

The overall aim of the evaluation process is to select the Tender that is the most economically advantageous to the Authority, having regard to the Authority's overall objectives and the criteria set out below.

Evaluation of Tenders comprise of the stages set out in the table below.

The Authority will carry out its evaluations of the Technical **(70%)** and Commercial **(30%)** elements according to the criteria, sub-criteria and weightings set out in the table below and **Appendix C**. The detailed questions and guidance are set out in the Authority's eSourcing (Atamis):

Evaluation of Responses

Evaluation of Responses will be undertaken by a panel appointed by the Authority. Each panel member will first undertake an independent evaluation of the Responses applying the relevant evaluation criteria for each question. Then, a moderation meeting will be held at which the evaluation panel will reach a consensus on the marking of each question.

During the consensus meeting, the decision may be taken that a Response will not be carried forward to the next evaluation stage if the consensus view is that the Tenderer has failed to meet any minimum or mandatory requirements, and/or provided a non-compliant response.

Stage	Section Reference	Evaluation Criteria	Question Scoring/ Weighting (%)
Stage 1	Form of Tender	This stage is not scored but if you do not upload a complete, signed and dated Form of Tender in accordance with the instructions in Atamis, your Tender will be rejected as non-compliant.	Pass/Fail
Stage 2	Selection Stage:	This stage is designed to select those Tenderers who are suitable to deliver the Authority's requirements and will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out in Sections 1 to 5 of the response form in Atamis	Pass/Fail

		<p>and Part 1 of this Section 2 below (in respect of economic and financial standing and technical and professional ability).</p> <p>Failure to meet the stated selection criteria will result in a Response being rejected at this stage and no further assessment of the remainder of the Response (including the Tender) pursuant to the remaining stages below will be undertaken by the Authority.</p>	
Stage 3	Technical & Professional Ability – Project Specific Requirements (Technical Questionnaire)	<p>This stage will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out in the Technical Questionnaire.</p> <p>Some requirements are mandatory and if you cannot provide them your Tender may be rejected.</p> <p>Scored as 70% weighting of the total available score, consisting of the following breakdown of questions:</p>	<p>Overall Scored weighting 70%</p> <p>F01 – Sustainability/Social Value Weighting = 100% or Pass/ Fail</p> <p>F02 - Health and Safety Weighting = 100% or Pass/ Fail</p> <p>E01 – Expertise, Approach and Methodology. Weighting = 35%</p> <p>E02 – Knowledge and Records Management. Weighting = 30%</p> <p>E03 – Operational Delivery. Weighting = 35%</p> <p>See Related Questions on</p>

			Appendix C of the Bidder Pack/ITT
Stage 4	Pricing Schedule	<p>Prices will be evaluated in accordance with criteria set out in the Pricing Schedule on the ITT and Atamis.</p> <p>Tenderers will be required to submit the total fixed cost for completing the project and include a breakdown of costs as specified in the requirements. Costs will need to be reasonable and competitive and offer value for money.</p>	Overall Scored weighting 30%
Stage 5	Final score / Award	<p>A Response which passes stage 1 and 2 will proceed to evaluation of Tenders in accordance with stages 3 to 5.</p> <p>The final score is calculated as follows:</p> <p>Total Technical Quality Requirements will make up to a maximum of 70% of total score. (Stage 3)</p> <p>Total Price Requirements will make up to a maximum of 30% of total score. (Stage 4)</p> <p>The most economically advantageous Tender will be the Tender with the highest final score.</p>	

- 1.1 Tenders will be evaluated on quality and price using the evaluation criteria set out in Atamis to determine which Tender is the most economically advantageous. The Authority will award the Contract to the Tenderer which submits the most economically advantageous tender which will be the highest scoring Tender after the weightings in clause 1.3 are applied.
- 1.2 Each question will be scored separately, and no reference will be made between the questions.

- 1.3 To ensure that the relative importance of both sets of criteria is correctly reflected in the overall score, a weighting system will be applied to the evaluation:
- The total quality scores awarded will form **70%** of the final score;
 - The score awarded for price will form **30%** of the final score.
- 1.4 Each scoring question in the quality evaluation is given a weighting to indicate the relative importance of that question in the overall quality score. Weightings for quality scores are provided with the evaluation criteria and are detailed on Atamis for each question in the response form. The evaluation criteria for price are set out in the Pricing Schedule.
- 1.5 Evaluation of Tenders will be undertaken by a panel appointed by the Authority. Each panel member will first undertake an independent evaluation of the Tenders applying the relevant evaluation criteria for each question. Then, a moderation meeting will be held at which the evaluation panel will reach a consensus on the marking of each question.
- 1.6 Questions asked by the Authority to evaluate submission's Technical Quality can be found on Atamis. These are repeated as Appendix C of this ITT for information purposes.
- 1.7 The method for scoring price can be found on Atamis.
- 1.8 The submissions against the Technical Quality questions **E01 – E03** will be evaluated using the following scoring criteria:

Technical Scoring Criteria – 70%

For a score of 100: Excellent - Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a best-in-class thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.

For a score of 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 50: Acceptable - Response is relevant and acceptable. The response provides sufficient evidence to fulfil basic requirements.

For a score of 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 0: Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.

If a Tenderer receives a 'Fail' in either question **F01 or F02** they will be eliminated from the procurement.

If a score of twenty (20) or less is awarded to a Tenderer's response to any scored question **E01 – E03** the Authority may choose to reject the Tender.

The commercial evaluation will be based on total price and bidders will be required to provide a full price breakdown of the cost, and matched against milestones in the commercial workbook.

Tenderers must provide a financial proposal, including rates and hours for each participating team member and costing analysed by work stages. The project is for a fixed cost. A breakdown of costs against each objective and against each key personnel including a detailed breakdown for equipment, consumables; overheads and travel costs are required. The Authority is keen to receive competitive Day Rates which must be set out in the "Commercial Workbook" (provided in the ITT pack); "Staff Costs" worksheet and ensure the details entered in the "Milestone" worksheet are that of the deliverables detailed in the specification.

The above is required to be uploaded to the 'Commercial Envelope' of Atamis.

Where subcontractors or joint contractors are used, a separate breakdown for each should be provided in addition to the overall project costs.

Day rates for all staff should be provided along with a general description of duties.

Tenderers will be required to submit a total fixed cost for completion of the project and include a breakdown of costs against each objective and against key personnel. Costs will need to be reasonable and competitive and offer value for money.

Please DO NOT include the commercial/pricing Schedule in your technical submission.

Commercial Evaluation – 30%

The calculation used is the following:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{Lowest Tender Price}}{\text{Tender Price}} \times 30\% \text{ Maximum available marks}$$

For example, if three Tender Responses are received and Tenderer A has quoted £3,000 as their total price, Tenderer B has quoted £5,000 and Tenderer C has quoted £6,000 then the calculation will be as follows:

Tenderer A Score = $\text{£}3000/\text{£}3000 \times 30\%$ (Maximum available marks) = **30%**

Tenderer B Score = $\text{£}3000/\text{£}5000 \times 30\%$ (Maximum available marks) = **18%**

Tenderer C Score = $\text{£}3000/\text{£}6000 \times 30\%$ (Maximum available marks) = **15%**

Commercial Pricing Breakdown applicable to this ITT is on Atamis. This should be downloaded; completed and attached to the commercial envelope.

***Please Note:**

Tenderers must be aware that all bids are **submitted** in acceptance of agreed Defra's terms and conditions of contract for R&D. Any clarifications regarding terms and conditions must be discussed & agreed during the tender period. No discussion of terms and conditions of contract shall be held following tender submission. Failure to agree with the terms and conditions of contract post tender shall result in a bid being deemed non-compliant.

Selection Questionnaire - Financial standing

The Authority will review the economic information provided as part of the Selection Questionnaire response to evaluate a Tenderer's economic and financial standing. The Authority's evaluation will be based on all the information reviewed and will not be determined by a single indicator. If, based on its assessment of the information provided in a Response, the Authority decides that a Tenderer does not meet the Authority's required level of economic standing, the Authority may:

- ask for additional information, including information relating to the Tenderer's parent company, if applicable; and/or
- require a parent company guarantee or a performance bond.

If the Authority decides that a parent company guarantee or performance bond is required, the Authority will reject a Response if the Tenderer is unable to offer a commitment to make such provision. In addition to the information provided in a Response, the Authority may, at its discretion, consult Dun & Bradstreet reports and other credit rating or equivalent reports depending on where a Tenderer is located.

The Authority's assessment of economic and financial standing will consider financial strength and risk of business failure. Financial strength is based on tangible net worth and is rated on a scale of 5A (strongest) to H (weakest) obtained from Dun & Bradstreet. There

are also classifications for negative net worth and net worth undetermined (insufficient information). Financial strength will be assessed relative to the estimated annual contract value.

The Authority will also consider annual turnover.

In the case of a joint venture or a consortium bid, the annual turnover is calculated by combining the turnover of the relevant organisations in each of the last two financial years.

Risk of Business Failure is rated on a scale of 1 (minimal) to 4 (significant) obtained from Dun & Bradstreet. There is also a classification of insufficient information. The Authority regards a score of 4 as indicating inadequate economic and financial standing for this procurement. The Authority will also calculate and evaluate the Tenderer's:

- Operating performance: growth or reductions in sales, gross profit, operating profit, profit before tax and earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, amortisation, exceptional items and profit/loss on sale of businesses;
- Liquidity: net current assets, movements in cash flow from operations, working capital and quick ratios, and average collection and payments periods; and financial structure: gearing ratios and interest cover.

Section 5: Performance Management Framework

1. Overview of the PMF

- 1.1. As part of the Authority's continuous drive to improve the performance of all Contractors, this PMF will be used to monitor, measure, and control all aspects of the Supplier's performance of contract responsibilities.
- 1.2. The PMF purpose is to set out the obligations on the successful Contractor, to outline how the successful Contractor's performance will be monitored, evaluated and rectified for performance.
- 1.3. The Authority may define any reasonable performance management indicators for the Contractor under the following categories:
 - Updates to Authority
 - Data Handling
 - Participatory Outputs
 - Reports
 - Presentations
- 1.4. The above categories are consistent with all Contract awards allowing the Authority to monitor Contractor' performance at both individual level and at the enterprise level with the individual Contractor.

2. Management of the PMF

- 2.1. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) shall be monitored on a regular basis and shall form part of the contract performance review. Performance of KPI's will be reported by the Contractor to the Authority on a monthly basis. The Contractor shall detail performance against KPI's at regularly agreed intervals with the Authority, who will review this and make comments if any.
- 2.2. The Contractor shall maintain their own management reports, including a Risk and Issues Log and present these as requested by the Authority at any meeting requested by the Authority.
- 2.3. Any performance issues highlighted in these reports will be addressed by the Contractor, who shall be required to provide an improvement plan ("Remediation Plan") to address all issues highlighted within a week of the Authority request.

- 2.4. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are essential in order to align Contractor's performance with the requirements of the Authority and to do so in a fair and practical way. KPIs must be realistic and achievable; they must also be met otherwise it will be taken as an indication that the Contractor is failing to deliver. The successful Contractor will ensure that failure and non-performance is quickly rectified.
- 2.5. The Authority reserves the right to amend the existing KPI's detailed in section 6 below or add any new KPI's. Any changes to the KPI's shall be confirmed by way of a Contract Change Note.

Section 6: Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

KPI and deliverables	Measurement	Fail	Acceptable
1. Updates to DWI	Regular, and ad hoc, verbal and written updates summarising progress and challenges	Updates are infrequent or lacking enough detail to assure the Authority of progress	Updates are timely and include enough detail to assure the Authority of progress
2. Data handling	Secure, accessible and organised collecting and storage of data/information relating to the project	Data, information and files are not kept up-to-date and are unavailable	All project data and information are up-to-date and accessible to the Authority
a. Evidence synthesis	Collection and storage of external and internal evidence sources, as well as any annotations / analysis	Evidence is only cited and not made available to the Authority	Evidence is gathered, stored and accessible to the Authority
b. Baselines and data collection plan	Collection and storage of data used to develop and test counterfactuals and baselines	Data is inadequate to achieve deliverable	Data is adequate and available to the Authority
3. Participatory outputs	Notes and outputs from participatory exercises with stakeholders	Notes and outputs are incomplete or missing	Notes and outputs are detailed and stored for future reference
4. Reports	Draft iterations and final reports, including comment logs and requested changes	Reports are late, incomplete and do not adequately address feedback from the Authority or deliverables	Reports are on time, complete, incorporate comments and address all deliverables
5. Presentations	Presentation materials and delivery of key findings	Presentations do not take place	Presentations take place and convey key findings clearly

Section 7: Definitions

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following words and expressions used within the Bidder Pack (except for Section 3: Terms and Conditions of Contract) shall have the following meanings to be interpreted in the singular or plural as the context requires.

TERM	MEANING
“Authority”	Means UK Government Department responsible for the environment, food and farming and rural affairs acting as part of the crown (DEFRA).
“Bidder Pack”	means this invitation to tender and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to Tenderers.
“Contract”	means the contract (set out in Appendix B) to be entered into by the Authority and the successful Tenderer.
“EIR”	means the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (as amended) together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or any Government Department in relation to those Regulations.
“eSourcing system”	means the eSourcing system is the eSourcing system (Atamis) used by the Authority for conducting this procurement, which can be found at https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome
“FOIA”	means the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as amended) and any subordinate legislation made under that Act together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or any Government Department in relation to that legislation.
“Form of Tender”	means the form contained in Appendix A to the Procurement Specific section of the Bidder Pack which must be signed, scanned and uploaded into the Authority’s eSourcing System by the Tenderer to indicate that it understands the Tender and accepts the various terms and conditions and other requirements of participating in the exercise.
“Information”	means the information contained in the Bidder Pack or sent with it, and any information which has been made available to the Tenderer by the Authority, its employees, agents or advisers in connection with the procurement.
“Involved Person”	means any person who is either working for, or acting on behalf of, the Authority in connection with this procurement and/or the Contract including, without limitation, any officer, employee, advisor, agent, member, partner or consultant”.
“Pricing Schedule”	means the form accessed via eSourcing system in which Tenderers are required to submit their pricing information as part of a Tender.
“Regulations”	means the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
“Relevant Body	means any other organisation, body or government department that is working with or acting on behalf of the

	Authority in connection with this procurement and/or the Contract including, without limitation, its officers, employees, advisors, agents, members, partners or consultants.
“Response”	means the information submitted in response to the Bidder Pack via the online response forms on eSourcing system including the Tenderer’s formal Tender.
“Specification of Requirements”	the Authority’s requirements set out in Section 2 of the Bidder Pack Procurement Specific Requirements.
“Tender”	means the formal offer to provide the goods or services described in section 1 of part 1 of the Bidder Pack and comprising the responses to the questions in eSourcing system and the Pricing Schedule.
“Tenderer”	means anyone responding to the Bidder Pack and, where the context requires, includes a potential tenderer.
“Timetable”	means the procurement timetable set out in Section 1 of the Bidder Pack Procurement Specific Requirements.

Appendix A – Form of Tender

To be returned by 12:00pm (GMT time) on **18th November 2024**.

Victor Mpehla
Procurement Advisor
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Procurement and Commercial Function

TENDER FOR: for the procurement of the study of the Prevalence of trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) in the environment and the effectiveness of current water treatment processes.

Tender Ref: Project/ITT **C26620**

1. We have examined the invitation to tender, and its schedules set out below (the **ITT**) and do hereby offer to provide the goods and/or services specified in the ITT and in accordance with the attached documents to the Authority commencing date **03/01/2025** for the period specified in the ITT.
 - Tender Particulars (Section 1)
 - Specification of Requirements (Section 2)
 - Form of Tender (Appendix A)
 - Authority's Conditions of Contract (Appendix B)
2. If this tender is accepted, we will execute the Contract, and any other documents required by the Authority within 10 days of being asked to do so.
3. We agree that:
 - a. before executing the Contract substantially in the form set out in the ITT, the formal acceptance of this tender in writing by this Authority or such parts as may be specified, together with the documents attached shall comprise a binding contract between the Authority and us;
 - b. pursuant to EU Directive 1999/93/EC (Community Framework for Electronic Signatures) and the Electronic Communications Act 2000, the Contract may be executed electronically using the Authority's electronic tendering and contract management system, Atamis;
 - c. we are legally bound to comply with the confidentiality provisions set out in the ITT;

- d. any other terms or conditions or any general reservation which may be provided in any correspondence sent by the Authority in connection with this procurement shall not form part of this tender without the prior written consent of the Authority;
- e. this tender shall remain valid for 120 days from the closing date for tenders specified in the ITT; and
- f. the Authority may disclose our information and documents (submitted to the Authority during the procurement) more widely within Government for the purpose of ensuring effective cross-Government procurement processes, including value for money and related purposes.

4. We confirm that:

- a. there are no circumstances affecting our organisation which could give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest that would affect the integrity of the Authority's decision making in relation to the award of the Contract; or
- b. if there are or may be such circumstances giving rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest, we have disclosed this in full to the Authority.

5. We undertake and it shall be a condition of the Contract that:

- a. the amount of our tender has not been calculated by agreement or arrangement with any person other than the Authority and that the amount of our tender has not been communicated to any person until after the closing date for the submission of tenders and in any event not without the consent of the Authority;
- b. we have not canvassed and will not, before the evaluation process, canvass or solicit any member or officer, employee or agent of the Authority or other contracting authority in connection with the award of the Contract and that no person employed by us has done or will do any such act; and
- c. made arrangements with any other party about whether or not they may submit a tender except for the purposes of forming a joint venture.

6. I warrant that I am authorised to sign this tender and confirm that we have complied with all the requirements of the ITT.

Signed

Date

In the capacity of

**Authorised to sign
Tender for and on
behalf of**

Postal Address _____

Post Code _____

Telephone No. _____

Email Address _____

Appendix B – Research & Development Terms & Conditions and Order Form

For information. [Located on the Authority's Atamis eSourcing system – the bidder pack]

[Research and development terms and conditions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Appendix C – Technical Evaluation Questions

In line with DEFRA policy, we will be awarding a contract to the Most Economically Advantageous ITT response (MEAT).

The overall score is broken down as follows: **70%** of the overall score will be awarded for technical criteria and **30%** of the overall score will be awarded for commercial/cost.

Please note responses will be assessed against demonstration of understanding of the Specification in the Bidder Pack.

The technical evaluation criteria that will be used to assess responses are set out in the table below. The Technical criteria is weighted according to its significance to the project, and this will be applied using the following scoring methodology:

Scoring Criteria	Scoring criteria
	<p>E01 - E03 will be scored using the following scoring criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For a score of 100: Excellent - Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a best-in-class thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full• For a score of 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 50: Acceptable - Response is relevant and acceptable. The response provides sufficient evidence to fulfil basic requirements• For a score of 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 0: Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement <p>If you score 20 or less in respect of questions E01 - E03 then you may be eliminated from the procurement.</p> <p>If a Tenderer receives a 'Fail' in any of the questions on F01 and, F02 they will be eliminated from the procurement.</p>

Please DO NOT include the commercial/pricing Schedule in your technical submission.			
Detailed technical criteria – 70%	Criteria	Weighting	Description
	F01 – Sustainability/Social Value	Pass/Fail – 100%	<p>The Authority has set itself challenging commitments and targets to improve the environmental and social impacts of its estate management, operation, and procurement. These support the Government’s green commitments. The policies are included in the Authority’s sustainable procurement policy statement published at:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-s-sustainable-procurement-policy-statement</p> <p>Within this context, please explain your approach to delivering the services and how you intend to reduce negative sustainability and social impacts, including employing a diverse pool of individuals. Please discuss the methods that you will employ to demonstrate and monitor the effectiveness of your organisation’s approach.</p> <p><u>Evaluation criteria:</u></p> <p>Your response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that the Tenderer has a sustainability policy in place; and • Provide evidence of your organisation’s approach to supporting social value. • How will you ensure that all practices used in this contract meet Defra’s sustainable procurement standards?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will you ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion considerations are implemented in the development of this contract? <p>A “Fail” will be allocated to a response that does not demonstrate any evidence of Sustainability and Social Value support policies.</p> <p>Please upload a document with the filename: F01 Your Company Name, Sustainability/Social Value.</p> <p>Your response must be a maximum of 2 sides of A4, font size 11 addressing the below questions. Any responses exceeding 2 sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page.</p>
	F02 Healthy and Safety	- Pass/fail 100%	<p><u>Evaluation criteria:</u></p> <p>Please provide a copy of your Health & Safety policy/statement and an example risk assessment from similar assignments. The risk assessment should identify associated risks, control or mitigation measures, and residual risk levels.</p> <p>Your response should provide details of suitably robust procedures for health and safety, including how they will ensure surveys will be conducted in a safe manner.</p> <p>Where the supplier is of 5 employees or less, please provide some detail about health and safety in your organisation.</p> <p>How will health and safety considerations be implemented in the development of this contract?</p>

			<p>A “Fail” will be allocated to a response that does not demonstrate any evidence of addressing health and safety.</p> <p>Please upload a document with the filename: F02 Your Company Name, Healthy and Safety, and any associated supporting documents.</p> <p>Your response must be a maximum of two sides of A4, font size 11 addressing the below question. Any responses exceeding two sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page.</p>
	<p>E01 – 35%</p> <p>Expertise, Approach and Methodology</p>		<p>a) Provide details of the proposed project team and the team structure, including any subcontractors. Include what each individual’s role will be and how their expertise and previous experience (including their connections) will enable them to successfully deliver the project specification.</p> <p>b) Please demonstrate your understanding of the research context and identify the key issues and challenges that you are proposing to address in this project.</p> <p>c) Please detail the approach and methodology to be adopted in order to deliver the full scope of requirements systematically and in detail.</p> <p>d) Please outline the approaches to be used to achieve the objectives and clearly define a work plan for the life of the project.</p> <p>e) If your proposal will deliver additional objectives or includes optional additional work packages, please clarify these and separately cost any optional work packages.</p>

			<p>Please upload your response with the filename "E01 Your Company Name; Expertise, Approach and Methodology".</p> <p>Your response must be a maximum of 10 sides of A4, font size 10, excluding the list of most recent publication references. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online. Any responses exceeding 10 sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page Furthermore, please provide CVs for members of the team to support your response. (Max 2 A4 sides, Arial font size 10, per CV).</p> <p><u>Evaluation Criteria:</u></p> <p>Higher marks will be awarded to submissions which demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent understanding of the requirements of the project, and the policy and international context in which the project operates. • A clear approach to each of the objectives, and how this is implemented. • Sufficient awareness and understanding of Government policy and the international situation. • Scope of the project – The Tenderer shall demonstrate a thorough and evidence-based justification for the method selected for development, and a suitable, realistic and robust methodology for undertaking the review and collating and analysing data. • An outline of how relevant parties will be engaged, and participation encouraged and maximised. • Identification of key milestones, tasks and critical paths, including a robust and credible approach to meeting or exceeding the deliverables and
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			<p>service levels outlined in the Specification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration and mitigation of any risks to meeting the objectives, with full and comprehensive proposals. • Innovative measures proposed within the methodology which demonstrate value for money whilst meeting project objectives
	<p>E02 – Knowledge and Records Management</p>	<p>30%</p>	<p>a) Consider the expected outputs which may arise from this project, identify key audiences for the results and outline your plans for knowledge exchange and communications of results. Provide a list of all proposed project outputs, including datasets, analysis of findings, publications, presentations or demonstrations, and a brief description of how you anticipate the results will be used and by whom.</p> <p>Please upload a document with the filename: “E02 – Your Company Name, Knowledge and Records Management”</p> <p>Your response must be a maximum of 1 side of A4 font size 10. excluding the list of most recent publication references. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online. Any responses exceeding 1 side of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page.</p> <p><u>Evaluation Criteria:</u></p> <p>Higher marks will be awarded to submissions which demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The list of proposed project outputs, including datasets, publications, presentations or demonstrations • The likely long-term usefulness of the project outputs • The identified key audiences for the results demonstrate good knowledge

			<p>of relevant stakeholders and likelihood of successful stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge exchange and communication plans provide confidence that relevant stakeholders will be aware of project outputs, understand their limitations and use them • Consideration of presentational issues and language - especially the need to translate between technical language to plain English
	E03 - Operational Delivery	35%	<p>a) Please evidence your operating procedures for sample processing, identification and enumeration, together with your approach to compiling and retaining reference material</p> <p>b) Please describe your sample handling and storage procedures, for a sample from the point of receipt through to disposal. Please include a description of all associated storage facilities</p> <p>c) Please provide a detailed description of your internal quality control procedures and how this reflects staff performance</p> <p>d) Please provide details of the external Quality Assurance systems you have in place and any relevant certifications/accreditation you hold. Provide evidence of external Assured Quality Control procedures and standard achieved within any National AQC schemes for the past three years. Please name the companies that undertake your external quality audits. Please provide up-to-date certificates</p> <p>e) Please provide names and credentials of 2 independent specialist contacts/organisations that may be called</p>

			<p>upon if specimen identification requires further clarification.</p> <p>Please upload a document with the filename: "E03 – Your Company Name, Operational Delivery"</p> <p>Your response must be a maximum of 2 sides of A4 font size 10. Any responses exceeding 2 sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page.</p> <p><u>Evaluation Criteria:</u></p> <p>Higher marks will be awarded to submissions which demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate operating procedures for methods to be applied in the research project, including suitable version and change control management • Evidence of robust sample controls from collection through to disposal to ensure sample stability and quality is considered prior to analysis • Appropriate quality control procedures are embedded and, where relevant, accreditation/ certification is evidenced for internal and external activities associated with the research project • Evidence of access or partnerships with appropriate specialists/ organisations to support the research work delivery where required.
<p>Commercial Scoring and calculation method – 30%</p>	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Please DO NOT include the commercial/pricing Schedule in your technical submission.</p> <p>The calculation used is the following:</p> <p>Score = <u>Lowest Tender Price</u> x 30% Maximum available marks</p>		

	<p style="text-align: center;">Tender Price</p> <p>For example, if three Tender Responses are received and Tenderer A has quoted £3,000 as their total price, Tenderer B has quoted £5,000 and Tenderer C has quoted £6,000 then the calculation will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenderer A Score = $\frac{£3000}{£3000} \times 30\%$ (Maximum available marks) = 30% • Tenderer B Score = $\frac{£3000}{£5000} \times 30\%$ (Maximum available marks) = 18% • Tenderer C Score = $\frac{£3000}{£6000} \times 30\%$ (Maximum available marks) = 15%
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Appendix D

Commercially Sensitive Information (Attached)

Please re-produce and upload as an attachment on Atamis if applicable

TENDERER'S COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE INFORMATION	POTENTIAL IMPLICATION OF DISCLOSURE	DURATION COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE INFORMATION OF

Appendix E

PRICING SCHEDULE

For completion according to the ITT Specification (Available on Atamis. Please upload to Atamis)

Appendix F

STAFF TIME IN DAYS TEMPLATE

For Completion (Available on Atamis. Please upload to Atamis)