

www.gov.uk/naturalengland

Request for Quotation

**Request for Quotation**

**Medway Estuary MCZ Phase 1 & 2 intertidal Survey**

You are invited to submit a quotation for the requirement described in the specification below.

Please confirm, by email, receipt of these documents and whether you intend to submit a quote.

Your response should be returned to the following email addresses by:

Email: becca.turley@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 15/12/2022

Time: 12:05

Reference: MedwayMCZ\_2022\_Intertidal\_RFQ

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

**Contact Details and Timeline**

Becca Turley 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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Action | Date |
| Date of issue of RFQ | 01/12/2022 |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 13/12/2022 |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 15/12/2022 |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 22/12/2022 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 03/01/2023 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration | Week commencing 27/03/2023 |

**Glossary**

Unless the context otherwise requires the following words and expressions used within this Request for Quotation shall have the following meanings (to be interpreted in the singular or plural as the context requires):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| “Authority” | Means the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs acting as part of Natural England |
| “RFQ” | Means this Request for Quotation and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to suppliers |
| “Contract” | Means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier. |

**Conditions applying to the RFQ**

You should examine your response to the RFQ and related documents ensuring it is complete prior to submitting your completed quotation.

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

The supplier by submitting a quotation is deemed to accept the terms and conditions in the RFQ. Failure to comply with the instructions set out in the RTQ may result in the supplier’s exclusion from this procurement.

**Acceptance of Quotations**

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

**Costs**

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

**Mandatory Requirements**

The RFQ includes mandatory requirements and, if you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated.

**Clarifications**

The Authority reserves the right to discuss, confidentially, any aspect of your quotation with you prior to any award of Contract to clarify matters.

**Amendments**

The Authority may amend the RFQ at any time prior to the deadline for receipt. If it amends the RFQ the Authority will notify you in writing and may extend the deadline for receipt in order to give you a reasonable time in which to take the amendment into account.

**Conditions of Contract**

The terms and conditions: [Condensed Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement) will be included in any contract awarded as a result of this RFQ process. The Authority will not accept any material changes to these terms and conditions proposed by a supplier.

**Specification**

The Authority is Natural England. The Authority’s priorities are to secure a healthy natural environment; a sustainable, low-carbon economy; a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply. Further information about the Authority can be found at: [Natural England](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/)

**Specification**

1. **Introduction**

Natural England (NE) is the government’s advisor on the natural environment. We provide practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England’s natural wealth for the benefit of everyone.

NEs remit is to ensure sustainable stewardship of the land and sea so that people and nature can thrive. It is NEs responsibility to see that England’s rich natural environment can adapt and survive intact for future generations to enjoy.

Further information on the Authority can be found at: [Natural England](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/)

Medway Estuary Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is an inshore site on the Kent coast which was designated in 2013 under the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009). In 2019, the MCZ boundary was extended further upstream from Borstal to Allington Locks to encompass migrating smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*) as a new designated feature. The MCZ completes the protection of habitats within the Medway Estuary, with its designated broad-scale habitat features, such as estuarine rocky habitats and intertidal rock features which are relatively rare habitats within the south-east of England.

Natural England seeks to complete evidence gaps in previous Phase 1 and 2 surveys of the intertidal habitats in Medway Estuary MCZ. The surveys would identify and map the extent and distribution, species composition and distribution of biotopes within the intertidal habitats of Medway Estuary MCZ.

Peat and clay exposures within the Medway Estuary MCZ are of particular interest to Natural England, due them being a rare and irreplaceable habitat, and UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat, sensitive to interactions with fishing gear.

**Table 1: Summary of designated Medway Estuary MCZ Features and their General management approach (GMA) (targeted features for the survey are highlighted)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Feature type** | **Protected features** | **General Management Approach** |
|  | Intertidal mixed sediments | Maintain in favourable condition |
| Intertidal sand and muddy sand |
| Low energy intertidal rock |
| Subtidal coarse sediment |
| Subtidal mud |
| Subtidal sand |
| Habitat feature of conservation importance | Peat and clay exposures |
| Estuarine rock habitats |
| Species feature of conservation importance | Tentacled lagoon worm (*Alkmaria romijni*) |
| Smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*) | Recover to favourable condition |

* 1. **Survey area**

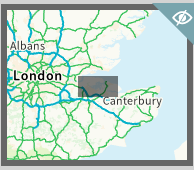
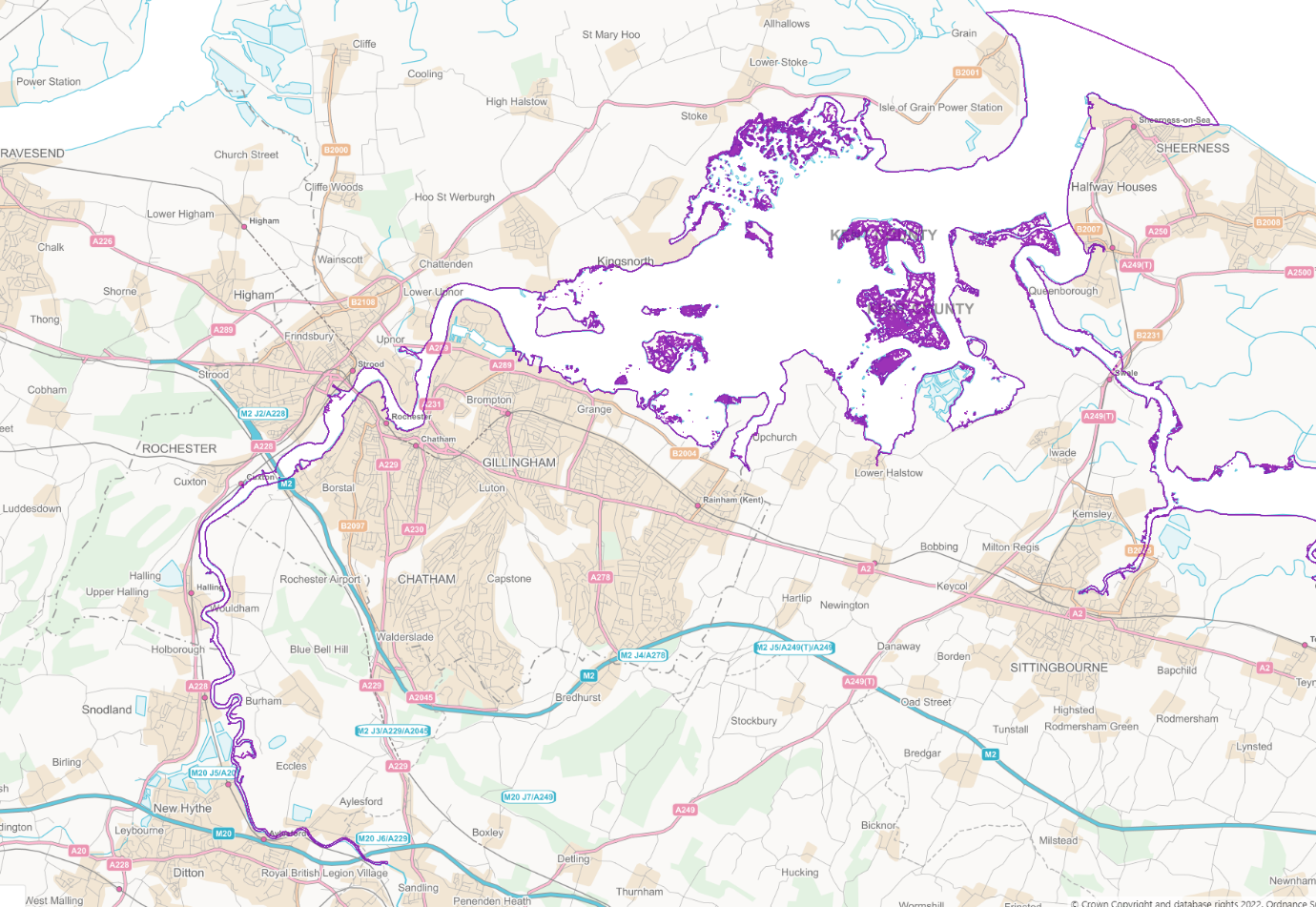


Figure 1. The location and boundaries of the Medway Estuary MCZ.

**1.2 Previous surveys**

1. In 2019 a Phase 1 and 2 Intertidal survey was started across the intertidal habitats of the Medway Estuary MCZ (Estuarine rocky habitats, Intertidal mixed sediments, Intertidal sand and muddy sand, Low energy intertidal rock and Peat and clay exposures).The aim of the Phase I assessment was to identify and map the extent of intertidal habitats, understand species composition (semi-quantitative data for dominant and characterising species present) and the distribution of biotopes within the intertidal sediments of the Medway Estuary MCZ, to inform a subsequent quantitative Phase II survey which was undertaken by the Environment Agency.

The habitat mapping survey was conducted from a hovercraft. The field team recorded the range and extent of biotopes present in intertidal areas by assessing biotopes in situ according to the CCW for Marine intertidal Phase I mapping surveys (Wyn et al. 2006), Marine Monitoring Handbook (Davies et al. 2001), CSM guidance (JNCC 2004), JNCC biotope allocation guidance (Connor et al. 2004) and EUNIS (EEA 2017). Ad-hoc sampling locations were selected, covering each biotope and sediment type. At each sampling location, a 0.01 m2 core was taken by hand and sieved through a 0.5 mm sieve. Each sample was then examined in situ with identification of conspicuous species taking place. Species that could not be readily identified in the field and were considered important, i.e. conspicuous and/or abundant taxa or potential NNS requiring verification, representatives were be retained for later identification in APEM’s laboratories. Throughout Phase I surveying, descriptions of each habitat were recorded and the information incorporated general site conditions, including sediment type and topography. Notes were be made in relation to any potential anthropogenic pressures at a given site which could influence intertidal ecology (e.g. pipelines, point source pollution, bait diggers) including their locations (marked with GPS where possible), the nature of the pressure, whether it seems to be continuous or intermittent.

**These Phase 1 and 2 habitat surveys are incomplete as, due to COVID restrictions, the whole area of the Medway Estuary MCZ was not able to be surveyed. As a result, any data is heavily caveated and is not published externally.**

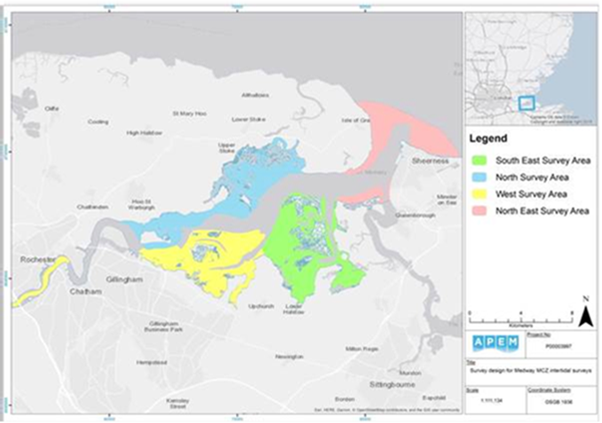


Figure 2. Intertidal survey areas of the Medway Estuary MCZ from the incomplete Phase 1 survey.

Please note that, where possible, these datasets should be incorporated into the current report, however the methodology should not necessarily be followed, and the contractor is invited to suggest an integrated survey plan.

Please note that, where possible, these datasets should be considered in the outputs of this project, however the methodology should not necessarily be followed, and the contractor is invited to suggest an integrated survey plan. The outputs of this survey may be used by NE for a number of different purposes, including Condition Assessment, the formulation of Conservation Advice and to improve our understanding of Ecosystem Assets pursuant to the Natural Capital approach. Datasets will also be made available externally for the purpose of assessment of impact of various activities including fishing activity. Therefore, ideally datasets must be comparable with historic data and methodologies to enable analyses, however different and novel approaches will be considered where a rationale is provided.

1. **Aims & Objectives**

**2.1 Aims**

Natural England wishes to commission intertidal survey work during January and March 2023. The aim of this project is to complete Phase 1 and 2 surveys of the location and quality of intertidal habitats, particularly peat and clay exposures, within Medway Estuary MCZ.

These projects will deliver a detailed map of features at a range of Eunis levels. Natural England will interrogate and analyze the detailed evidence collected (as part of a separate, internal exercise) to inform Condition Assessment, the formulation of Conservation Advice and the construction of an Ecosystem Asset baseline for the area in question.

The information gathered must be of sufficient quality to provide a comparison with previous surveys (where possible) relating to intertidal habitat features according to methodologies outlined in JNCC common standards guidance.

**Please note, this invitation to tender covers both Phase 1 and Phase 2 survey elements, however, these elements could be awarded separately. Tenderers should therefore cost for these elements separately but indicate where cost savings could be made if both elements were awarded to a single tenderer.**

The survey design for this tender should achieve the following aims:

1. Acquire high quality biological data of suitable resolution to allow key attributes of condition to be assessed according to Common Standards Monitoring guidance.
2. Using the data collected, make an assessment of change against previously collected data sets and thereby an initial assessment of feature condition following Common Standards Monitoring Guidance.

In brief, Natural England are seeking potential contractors to pay particular attention to survey design so that quantitatively robust data is acquired which will permit rigorous statistical analysis and support robust condition assessment judgements of the relevant SAC/SSSI components of the EMS.

**2.2 Objectives**

The specific objectives of this contract are to:

* In collaboration with Natural England, plan, undertake and report on intertidal sampling techniques in order to inform monitoring of the Medway Estuary MCZ.
* Undertake a cost-effective sampling strategy to fill evidence gaps from incomplete Phase 1 and Phase 2 intertidal datasets in the Medway Estuary MCZ, to be assessed against the relevant attributes. As some baseline data of the intertidal habitats exists for the MCZ, it is anticipated that this previous data will be utilised to reduce time in the field.

The overall outputs of this contract are:

* Using previous data, identify and map the extent and distribution of biotopes and biological communities within the intertidal habitats in Medway Estuary MCZ, according to the JNCC Marine Habitat Classification for Britain and Ireland.
* Provide semi-quantitative information on species composition across the range of habitat biotopes and biotope complexes identified.
* Inform a subsequent quantitative Phase 2 survey with infauna and PSA analysis of intertidal sediments.

The attributes to be monitored are:

**Feature 1:**

* **Peat and Clay Exposures**

**Attributes:**

* Attribute 1 – Extent and distribution
* Attribute 2 - Presence and spatial distribution of biological communities
* Attribute 3 - Species composition of component communities
* Attribute 4 - Non-native species and pathogens

In addition, data may be gathered on beach height to inform areas with accruing and eroding sediment, in particular where erosion is exposing more peat and clay features.

**Feature 2:**

* **Estuarine Rocky Habitats**

**Attributes:**

* Attribute 1 – Extent and distribution
* Attribute 2 - Presence and spatial distribution of biological communities
* Attribute 3 - Species composition of component communities
* Attribute 4 - Non-native species and pathogens
* Attribute 5 – Morphology
* Attribute 6 – Presence and abundance of key structural species and influential species

**Feature 3:**

* **Low Energy Intertidal Rock**

**Attributes:**

* Attribute 1 – Extent and distribution
* Attribute 2 - Presence and spatial distribution of biological communities
* Attribute 3 - Species composition of component communities
* Attribute 4 - Non-native species and pathogens

**Feature 4:**

* **Intertidal Mixed Sediments**

**Attributes:**

* Attribute 1 – Extent and distribution
* Attribute 2 - Species composition of component communities
* Attribute 3 – Sediment composition and distribution
* Attribute 4 - Non-native species and pathogens

**Feature 5:**

* **Intertidal Sand and Muddy Sand**

**Attributes:**

* Attribute 1 – Extent and distribution
* Attribute 2 - Species composition of component communities
* Attribute 3 – Sediment composition and distribution
* Attribute 4 - Non-native species and pathogens

For details on these attributes please refer to the conservation advice package for the site [Marine site detail (naturalengland.org.uk)](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UKMCZ0011&SiteName=medway%20estuary&SiteNameDisplay=Medway%20Estuary%20MCZ&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality=4&HasCA=1).

Under this specification contractors must:

1. Develop, agree and implement, in collaboration with Natural England, a survey plan to collect data suitable for undertaking assessment of the direction of ecological change within the communities / habitats identified under this specification, wherever possible integrating and interrogating previously obtained relevant data in the analysis.
2. Where a suitable baseline has not previously been established, the survey design proposed should seek to fulfill the additional objective of providing an ecological baseline for attribute condition (from which to assess future change)
3. Where possible, ensure that newly collected data is analytically compatible with historical survey data, but at the very least will make reference to and utilise such historical data.
4. In agreement with Natural England, implement a statistically robust survey design to enable future collection of compatible data, permitting quantitative long-term analysis. Analysis should incorporate univariate and multivariate statistics.
5. Ensure anthropogenic influences, potentially impacting the feature, are identified, and where possible quantified, allowing analysis to focus on investigation of the potential impacts of these pressures (e.g. bait digging, fishing activities, coastal defence works, and damaging activities). These should be mapped where possible in accordance with the methods outlined in the CCW Phase 1 [Biotope Handbook](http://www.ccgc.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/managing-land-and-sea/idoc.ashx?docid=a393937a-b057-4fec-9eba-e534ec627599&version=-1) and should include damaging or potentially damaging activities.
6. Please note: Sample infauna and PSA analysis will be undertaken by a third-party contractor under a separate NE/EA framework. (**Sample analysis is therefore not required in the costing**). The contractor is expected to liaise with the sample contractor and ensure samples are couriered to them for analysis. Samples may need to be stored by the contractor in a safe refrigerated facility prior to postage. This should all be included in the costing.
7. Provide a preliminary assessment of the condition of the feature from the field data and observations you have collected, clearly stating out how the assessment is supported by the analysis of data collected. Note: this is not the formal condition assessment that will be undertaken by Natural England using all relevant data. This preliminary assessment should pay particular attention to noting any differentiation in observed condition between similar communities which are subject to varying degrees of anthropogenic pressures in order to focus analysis on investigating particular impacts.
8. Provide fully detailed “standard operating protocols” for the work undertaken to ensure that methods can be repeated in the future.
9. Produce a concise, evidence based technical report detailing the work undertaken, reporting the survey and analytical findings, discussing these in the light of any previous data and providing the preliminary field condition of the sub-feature.
10. In discussions around the findings of this work, observations made regarding condition, drawing upon “expert judgement” in addition to the collected and analysed data, must be clearly identified and presented separately from the core results of this survey work.
11. To report the detailed findings of the project in succinct and clear final reports, including appropriate GIS, Marine Recorder and MEDIN outputs. For the majority of the report biotope codes and maps need to be provided in MNCR (04/05) classification however underlying GI layers should also hold EUNIS level 3 classification data and a separate map should be provided of habitats in level 3 EUNIS classifications in the main report.
12. A MESH data confidence assessment for each habitat map should be calculated and provided in a ‘MESH confidence scoresheet’ \*.XLS file. The confidence assessment process is described and a template provided in the following MESH resources [The MESH Confidence Assessment Scheme](http://www.emodnet-seabedhabitats.eu/default.aspx?page=1693).
13. Provide all data to the relevant standards set out in section 4.1.
14. **Methods**

**3.1 Development of a suitable sampling design**

A sampling design needs to be developed for this work. This should seek to build on any previous work listed and, where possible, enable temporal comparisons to be made with previous datasets,

In developing an appropriate sampling strategy contractors should not be bound to simply repeat the previous methodology undertaken; rather they should seek to implement an improved approach which enables a comparison with existing data but at the same time delivers Natural England’s requirements for a more statistically robust approach outlined above.

**3.2 Pre-survey deskwork**

Before the survey is carried out the contractor will discuss any pre-survey work with the Nominated Officer, including:

1. Clarification of roles, responsibilities and expectations
2. Acquisition and checking of sources of relevant information and gathering of local advice in preparation of a project plan
3. Review existing information provided by Natural England or any datasets known to the contractor.
4. Ways of working and close collaboration with NE in developing project plan, particularly selection of survey sites, taking account of NE/EA pre-survey scoping work, and finalising survey design and methodologies.
5. Ensure that up to date charts are used to position sample sites away from cables, pipelines or any other coastal infrastructure. Should any coastal infrastructure exist within an area to be sampled then a buffer should be used to ensure that sampling activity does not cause damage and this should be clearly displayed within the survey plan. Should coastal infrastructure be found during fieldwork then any sample sites should be relocated and the Nominated Officer informed

**3.3 Site access**

The Nominated Officer should be contacted prior to commencement of any fieldwork.

Natural England will obtain permission from seabed owners or leaseholders for survey work on the seabed and will supply a copy of this permission to the contractor. Each member of the survey team must carry a letter from Natural England to confirm that they are doing this work on the behalf of Natural England. Survey work will not be able to begin until access permissions have been obtained by Natural England.

Contractors should allow for the inclusion of Natural England staff on surveys wherever feasible. The Nominated Officer will liaise with the contractor regarding the availability of Natural England staff to join the survey, where available.

Where contractors intend to use either a vessel or hovercraft to access sites this requirement should be made clear in the tender submission and any use of these vehicles will be subject to SSSI consent and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This should be discussed from the outset with the Nominated Officer and site leads.

The removal of sediment samples from the seabed meets the terms of a marine licence exemption set out in [Article 17 of the Marine Licence (Exempted Activities) Order 2011 (as amended)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/409/article/17%22%20/t%20%22_blank)and a marine licence is therefore not required.  The MMO require notification of any exempted activities occurring; Natural England will be responsible for submitting the relevant information to the MMO for this.

Natural England will be responsible for obtaining permissions from the Crown Estate.

**3.4 Field survey**

**NE will discuss the survey plan with the contractor. We envisage the survey to follow a similar methodology to the previous Phase 1 and 2 intertidal surveys (as described in section 1.2). Previous data from these surveys can be shared once a contract has been awarded due to them being heavily caveated externally.**

**Survey work under the contract should be scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2023 where possible however, potential contractors should provide contingency dates should the planned survey be affected e.g. by weather downtime.**

NE envisages that the Phase I survey will cover 100% of the site wherever possible, to complete areas which were not surveyed in 2019. Where the area is large, or access complex then we would expect the contractor to present an appropriate strategy for the Phase I element that will cover as much of the site as possible. This will facilitate interpolation across non surveyed areas, to optimize the design by balancing desk based, Phase I and Phase II elements. This broad-scale “walkover” style survey is to be supported by stratified targeted in-situ survey stations distributed across the site. In-situ sampling at these stations are intended to standardise features recorded as part of the Phase I mapping process, improve in-situ granulometry and faunal descriptions and therefore improve accuracy of preliminary biotope identification. This survey should be planned in accordance with the methods detailed in the CSM guidance, JNCC Marine Monitoring Handbook, the CCW Handbook for Marine Intertidal Phase 1 Survey and Mapping, and CCW Handbook for Marine Intertidal Phase 2 Survey and Mapping.

A robust sampling strategy (consider Water Environment Regulations (WER) methodology and whether there will be any WER stations within your waterbody) for Phase II infaunal sampling of target habitats (e.g. coverage and other elements such as reef, mussel, sabellaria, cockles etc.) should be undertaken. We are not stipulating locations for the Phase II element of the survey but would expect that these should be agreed with Natural England. The Phase II survey plan should be agreed following the results of the Phase I survey to ensure samples are taken from across representative habitats.

Sample locations should be:

* Geographically spread throughout the site
* Representative of the range of sediments of interest
* Proportionate in their split to the overall coverage of the sediment of interest
* Randomly located within the broad sediment types identified through Phase I
* Distributed across the site as transects with stations at mid and low shore (where appropriate)
* If appropriate sampling can be stratified using the sectors described below

A series of single cores should be taken from each station across the site, with a subset of stations where triplicate samples are taken (0.01m2 core, 0.5mm mesh sieve) for infaunal sampling (abundance) and stored separately (be mindful of previous Water Environment Regulations (WER) samples in the WB and number of triplicates needed for WER monitoring requirements). However, unlike WER methodology, these triplicate samples should be treated as individual samples and not combined. A further 0.01m2 core will be collected for PSA analysis at each station. Additionally, approximately 10 samples should be collected for contaminants analysis. Each station should also have a redox and an interstitial salinity measurement.

Contractors must clearly state their availability and capability to carry both this single contract and any other projects they may consider bidding for in combination within the given timescales.

Surveys will be carried out in accordance with the technical specification provided above. Alternative approaches will be considered if they meet the aims and objectives of the contract, demonstrate efficiencies and are agreed with NE prior to survey commencing.

**3.5 Sectors**

The field survey area should be divided into sectors for the purposes of reporting using natural boundaries; these sector boundaries should not conflict with SSSI unit boundaries however, sectors may contain more than one whole SSSI unit. Sector boundaries should follow those from the previous baseline surveys and must be agreed with the Nominated Officer prior to the field survey. Each sector should have its own site description that is more detailed than the overall site description. These should describe the main characteristics of the sector, including location, substratum and aspect. This should be compared to that information collated in any baseline surveys to indicate any potential changes and, where possible or apparent, reasons why this may be the case.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

Sample analysis will be undertaken by an independent party (please see section 2.2 (vi))

### 3.7 Invasive Non-Native Species

Invasive non-native species (INNS) are considered to be one of the top five pressures directly driving biodiversity loss globally. Prevention is the key focus, particularly in marine environments. The contractor shall be aware of and work in accordance with standard good practice biosecurity measures to avoid spread of INNS:

* Equipment, clothes and boots should be clean before carrying out any work on site
* When on or near water it is important that equipment is drained after use and as far as possible dried
* Boats to be used in survey work should have their hulls cleaned on a regular basis. Best practice guidelines should be followed as outlined by [The Green Blue](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk/boat_users/antifoul_and_invasive_species/boaters_best_practice_invasive.aspx)

INNS species previously recorded in this region and/or to particularly look out for during this survey. See [GB non-native species secretariat](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/).

The contractor must report any records of INNS observed on site on Marine Recorder and to the Natural England project officer as part of the survey report. Any species currently listed as ‘alert’ species should be flagged immediately to the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/index.cfm>. More information and guidance including ID guides can be found at [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org) and the [Marine Aliens Project](http://www.marlin.ac.uk/marine_aliens/).

**3.8 H & S Requirements**

All risk assessments need to be seen and signed off by the Nominated Officer (ideally when presented with the project plan), as part of the contract management process. Risk assessments need to be provided by the contractor. Surveys will be done out of season, therefore risks around reduced daylight and poor weather etc. need to be highlighted.

### 3.9 Weather downtime & contingency

Survey windows should be allocated in accordance with the best tides available. Contractors will be expected to check weather regularly (daily) prior to agreed survey windows.  If contractors have 48 hours notice of impending poor weather then they will be expected to make alternative arrangements for the duration of the poor weather and reschedule survey work to be completed at a later date.  If contractors have not yet mobilised then Natural England does not expect to be charged for any weather downtime.  It is the responsibility of the contractor to contact Natural England in the event that impending poor weather is putting the survey at risk.

Natural England does not envisage paying for downtime or contingency time for intertidal survey contracts, but in the event of unforeseeable weather events, a maximum of 1 day may be paid.

In the event of uncertainty or other unforeseen events that impact upon the ability of the contractor to undertake the survey, the Natural England Nominated Officer should be contacted immediately.

1. **Outputs – Products and Timescales**

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by Becca Turley

The project outputs will follow the objectives set out in this tender (Section 3) and refer to available guidance for writing Natural England Technical publications.

Suppliers are to fill in the costing template below in application for the RFQ.

**4.1** **Reporting and analysis**

Draft reports should be provided in electronic MS Office Word \*.DOCX format for comment. A template and guidance exists for writing Natural England commissioned reports and will be sent to the contractor upon award of the tender. All reports should retain a clear suggested citation stating that it is a ‘Report to Natural England’.

Data must be interpreted, analysed and presented in light of the overarching hypotheses stated above. Contractors should pay particular consideration to the data and GIS required formats for information compatibility including MEDIN metadata standards and Marine Recorder provision. All datasets must have associated metadata and meet appropriate organisational metadata standards. Relevant metadata standards are a requirement for data which we publish externally.

All interpreted products following data analysis should accompany the draft report; these will include:

* All GIS datasets need to be provided in ESRI ArcGIS format compatible with ArcGIS 10.2 and have attached metadata.
* All GIS files containing habitat data for each individual survey need to be produced to the [MESH translated habitat Data Exchange Format (DEF)](http://www.emodnet-seabedhabitats.eu/default.aspx?page=1636) to the most detailed EUNIS habitat level possible. MNCR ([v15.03](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/MarineHabitatClassification)) data should be added to the ORIG\_HAB column. The GUI provided by Natural England for each survey will be used, and as much information as possible (e.g. survey name, originally assigned feature/habitat name etc.) from the original dataset, as well as any documentation provided (where available) should be included in the resulting datasets to maintain a useful audit trail. As specified in the [MESH DEF](http://www.emodnet-seabedhabitats.eu/default.aspx?page=2067), data files must be provided as ESRI Shapefiles or as a feature class data within a geodatabase using the WGS1984 geographic coordinate system and (lat/long coordinates. If not included in the GIS data layers listed above all sampling locations, vessels tracks, and links to data obtained should also be included as a single GI layer.
* A MESH data confidence assessment for each habitat map should be calculated and provided in a ‘MESH confidence scoresheet’ \*.XLS file. The confidence assessment process is described and a template provided in the following MESH resources [The MESH Confidence Assessment Scheme](http://www.emodnet-seabedhabitats.eu/default.aspx?page=1693).
* Accompanying metadata for the data set must meet the [MEDIN metadata discovery standard](http://www.oceannet.org/marine_data_standards/medin_disc_stnd.html). Metadata derived as part of this project must be submitted to Natural England in an XML file which Natural England will archive through Data Archive Centres (DACs). Guidance ‘MEDIN Evidence for Contractors’ will be provided to the winning contractor.
* Copies of the original data spreadsheets or databases are to be provided in the appropriate Microsoft Office format
* Stills photographs to be provided in their raw format on CD/DVD or USB compliant external hard drives.

All sample data (e.g. grab sample analyses, video/still photography analyses, PSA analysis and biotope lists, biological taxon data) need to be entered into [Marine Recorder](https://www.esdm.co.uk/marine-recorder) NBNdata and an exported snapshot file of the data should be provided for QA. Natural England will provide licence keys for Marine Recorder. Natural England will supply a ‘Marine Recorder guidance for contractors’ document to successful contractors.

The contractor must report any records of Invasive and Non Native Species observed on site on Marine Recorder and to the Natural England project officer as part of the survey report. Any species currently listed as ‘alert’ species should be flagged immediately to the GB Non Native Species Secretariat [Species alerts](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/index.cfm). More information and guidance including ID guides can be found at [GB non-native species secretariat](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/).

Copies of the original data spreadsheets or databases are to be provided in the appropriate Microsoft Office format. However please be aware that using MEDIN marine biodiversity data guideline spreadsheets (available online under the marine biodiversity tab at [MEDIN data guidelines](http://www.oceannet.org/marine_data_standards/medin_data_guidelines.html)) will ensure that biological taxon data is prepared correctly for entry into Marine Recorder and will facilitate the efficient entry of data into this system and the data archiving process in general. Natural England welcomes and supports the provision of raw data spreadsheets in the MEDIN format and expects that all raw datasheets will contain the mandatory fields in the MEDIN guidelines, regardless of their format.

Standard survey imagery (stills & video) is to be provided in their raw format electronically or on USB compliant external hard drives (to be provided by the contractor).

High quality imagery which has been selected to form part of the image reference collection for the survey need to be labelled appropriately, including the habitat/species which is represented. These should be provided as a separate folder on the storage device to the standard survey imagery.

All data products and electronic files must be appropriately named so they sufficiently describe the contents and are not purely a numerical value. All products should be named appropriately so that they can be clearly linked to the report/project.

Any species lists submitted will be compliant with current taxonomic names and synonyms (e.g. [Marine Species of the British Isles and Adjacent Seas (MSBIAS)](http://www.marinespecies.org/msbias/), World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS))

Video and still camera filenames must include the recording start date and time. Position data must be included within the overlay information.

We will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award. Upon completion of the field survey, the first of two staged payments for this contract will be released. Final payment will be issued upon completion of the final report.

**4.2** **Timeline for project delivery:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Event** | **Date** |
| Finalise sampling design | **20th January 2023** |
| Produce final project plan | **27th January 2023** |
| Obtain any necessary access permissions | **10th February 2023** |
| Ground survey to be completed by | **3rd March 2023** |
| Submission of brief field report by | **10th March 2023** |
| Final report, biotope maps and output to be delivered | **31st March2 023** |

Natural England would expect to discuss and review timelines with the successful contractor in the start-up meeting and throughout the duration of the contract. Any delays to this timetable should be discussed with the Natural England Project Officer and delays not outside the control of the contractor will be penalised.

1. **Other**

In support of this contract NE will provide the winning supplier with:

* Project support from dedicated Nominated Officer
* Opportunity to feedback and discuss progress and the project
* Supporting GIS datasets (if required) under licence for use in this contract:
  1. Base map data from [Ordnance Survey](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/)
  2. Aerial photography from [Next Perspectives](http://www.nextperspectives.co.uk/)
  3. S-57 vector data from the UK Hydrographic Office (in ArcGIS format)\*
  4. Raster charts from [Oceanwise](http://www.infoterra.co.uk/) (Not to be used for Navigation)

Please see the following site for information on how to acquire GI information <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-access-natural-englands-maps-and-data>

The intellectual property rights and copyright for all products (including photographs) will lie with Natural England. Natural England aims to make all data available under the [Open Government Licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/) at the end of the project via [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk/) and the MEDIN Data Archiving Centres.

**5.1 Supporting Documents**

To assist contractors in developing their tender submission we will provide background reports and summary output documents with this specification:

[Marine conservation zones: Medway Estuary - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-conservation-zone-2013-designation-medway-estuary)

1. **References**

Davies, J., Baxter, J., Bradley, M., Connor, D., Khan, J., Murray, E., Sanderson, W., Turnbull, C. & Vincent, M., (2001), Marine Monitoring Handbook, 405 pp, ISBN 1 85716 550 0. Available online at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2430>

JNCC (2004), Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Marine, Version August 2004, ISSN 1743-8160. Available online at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2236>

## Contract Award Criteria

We will award this contract in line with the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) as set out in the following award criteria:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weighting** | **Scores** |
| Cost | 50% | Ranked in cost order |
| Availability/ capacity |  | Pass/fail |
| Quality of proposal based on the survey design meeting the requirements of the new proposal, number of samples, statistical rigour and power of the design. | 30% | Using scoring criteria set out below |
| The ability of the sampling strategy to be replicated in future years or for other applications | 10% | Using scoring criteria set out below |
| Quality assurance measures | 10% | Using scoring criteria set out below |
|  | | |

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. The response fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.

**7.1 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.

By submitting a quotation you consent to these terms as part of the procurement.

**7.2 Disclaimers**

Whilst the information in this RFQ and any supporting information referred to herein or provided to you by the Authority have been prepared in good faith the Authority does not warrant that this information is comprehensive or that it has been independently verified.

The Authority does not:

* make any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFQ;
* accept any liability for the information contained in the RFQ or for the fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information; or
* accept any liability for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation or any other liability which cannot lawfully be excluded) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

Any supplier considering entering into contractual relationships with the Authority following receipt of the RFQ should make its own investigations and independent assessment of the Authority and its requirements for the goods and/or services and should seek its own professional financial and legal advice.

**Protection of Personal Data**

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 the contractor must agree to the following:

* You must only process any personal data in strict accordance with instructions from the Authority
* You must ensure that all the personal data that we disclose to you or you collect on our behalf under this agreement are kept confidential.
* You must take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees who have access to personal data.
* Only employees who may be required to assist in meeting the obligations under this agreement may have access to the personal data.
* Any disclosure of personal data must be made in confidence and extend only so far as that which is specifically necessary for the purposes of this agreement.
* You must ensure that there are appropriate security measures in place to safeguard against any unauthorised access or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage or disclosure of the personal data.
* On termination of this agreement, for whatever reason, the personal data must be returned to us promptly and safely, together with all copies in your possession or control.

**General Data Protection Regulations 2018**

For the purposes of the Regulations the Authority is the data processor.

The personal information that we have asked you provide on individuals (data subjects) that will be working for you on this contract will be used in compiling the tender list and in assessing your offer. If you are unsuccessful the information will be **held and destroyed within two years** of the award of contracts. If you are awarded a contract it will be retained for the duration of the contract and destroyed within **seven years** of the contract’s expiry.

We may monitor the performance of the individuals during the execution of the contract, and the results of our monitoring, together with the information that you have provided, will be used in determining what work is allocated under the contract, and in any renewal of the contract or in the award of future contracts of a similar nature. The information will not be disclosed to anyone outside the Authority without the consent of the data subject, unless the Authority is required by law to make such disclosures.

Appendix 1A: Technical Questions

Quotes will be evaluated for both technical and commercial merit using the evaluation criteria below to determine which quote is the most economically advantageous.

**Ref:**

**Project:**

**Technical questions – 70%**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **1. Please supply a proposed schedule of work, stating the timescales you will be able to execute and deliver the products specified above. See Section 4.1 Timeline for project delivery – Pass/Fail** |
| 1. **2. Provide a statement on your availability & capacity to mobilise a survey team - Pass/Fail.** |
| 1. **3. Provide CVs for the survey team. C.V.s should demonstrate appropriate skills for identifying fish species – 30 %** |
| 1. **4. Provide a summary of your survey design methodology – 15 %** |
| 1. **5. Report proposal including data analysis – 25 %** |

Appendix 1B: Costings

**Ref:**

**Project:**

**Commercial Questions 30%**

**Please create new lines where necessary**

**Contractors should provide costing for 2 and 3 days of surveying**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Costs** | | | | | |
| **ITEM** | **SPECIFICATION TITLE** | **Staff to deliver work** | **No. of days** | **UNIT PRICE (ex. VAT) £** | **TOTAL PRICE**  **(ex. VAT) £** |
| **1** | Pre-survey planning, design and project management *(Provide breakdown to include preparation of Project Plan, Risk Assessment and any start-up meetings with NE)* |  |  |  |  |
| **2** | Fieldwork vessel and equipment |  |  |  |  |
| **3** | Fieldwork personnel |  |  |  |  |
| **4** | Travel and subsistence costs for field work personnel |  |  |  |  |
| **5** | Data analysis, GIS and reporting (field report, review of data (MEDIN compliant) and photos/videos, GIS and mapping, Marine Recorder entry) |  |  |  |  |
| **6** | Other – please provide costs for any additional items |  |  |  |  |
| **7** | Please detail any assumptions made during pricing |  |  |  |  |
|  | **TOTAL COST** |  |  |  |  |

**SUBMITTED BY:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contractor name** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Telephone** |  |
| **Fax** |  |