Clarifications to Bidder’s Questions:

Website Design and Build

**Q1) Are you able to confirm if the project fee is £10K total, including ongoing support until 2031?**

A1) I can confirm that our budget for this work is £10k to include design and initial build, ongoing maintenance and support and hosting (if applicable) until 2031. This budget must also include all meeting costs, contact time and any travel expenses. From research we have undertaken with colleagues who have recently developed similar sites, we believe this is reasonable for what we require. You will see that we have requested a detailed breakdown of the costs by activity, specifically so we can see how costs such as ongoing support impact the overall cost.

**Q2) Based on your current needs, do you have a preference for which CMS you’d ultimately like to use?**

A2) We do not have a preference for CMS system at this time, my colleagues and I have worked with a couple of different systems in the past but in the first instance we would like to be guided by potential suppliers as to what they feel would best suit our needs and falls within our budget.

**Q3) Is the project open for subcontracting, and if so, can it be subcontracted to an Indian company?**

A3) In the event a supplier is proposing to use sub-contracting arrangements to deliver the project,  any sub-contracting arrangements must be in compliance with Natural England’s terms and conditions for goods and services and considered on the advice of our legal team and data protection team. We cannot comment on individual proposed sub-contracting arrangements at this point of the competition process. Tenders wishing to propose sub-contracting arrangements must provide full details of the sub-contracting arrangement and explain how the supplier intends to manage sub-contractors throughout the delivery of the project. The supplier must be able to demonstrate that sub-contractors have the expertise, previous experience and capabilities relevant to the tender requirements. Natural England may ask the supplier to provide clarification on specific sub-contracting arrangements proposed during the tender evaluation period.

Please note the details of the subcontracting arrangement must be included as part of your Technical criteria response.

**Q4) Should the subcontractor also hold the clarifications mentioned in the Project?**

A4) See above: The supplier must be able to demonstrate that sub-contractors have the expertise, previous experience and capabilities relevant to the tender requirements. Natural England may ask the supplier to provide clarification on specific sub-contracting arrangements proposed during the tender evaluation period.

**Q5) We are looking to understand the valid turnover eligibility condition from below when we are approaching any tenders/bids through Economical partnership option.**

**Scenario: Company X approaching a tender of value 100K GBP as a main lead bidder by joining 2 other independent subject matter expertise businesses (A & B) based in UK, who agreed to deliver a 70% of work split by 30:40 (A : B)**

A5) Please note that this contract opportunity is advertised at £10,000, not £100,000. Natural England is not enforcing minimum turnover requirements on this procurement. If a bid was to be entered as a partnership, this would need to be a formal legal arrangement, a bid could not be entered as an informal partnership.

**Q6) Please can I clarify that the budget of £10K includes 8 years of maintenance and hosting?  (If so this seems like a quite low budget for the requirements.)**

A6) We will shortly be publishing a revised RFQ document providing further clarification around the issues of timeframe and budget for the different components of the required work; delivery, maintenance, support and hosting. This is in response to receiving a number of questions of clarification around these matters.

I note that the intended contract period has also been revised from 05-02-2024 - 28-04-2024 to 05-02-2024 - 31-12-2026.

The revised text includes the following additional clarification:

## Timeframe

Phase 1 Design and Build - the design and initial build work will ideally be undertaken in February to April 2024 with a basic site live and CMS training carried out by latest 31 March 2024.

Phase 2 Active support - it is anticipated that updates to the project website during the delivery period of the LIFE WADER project to December 2026 will be delivered by the LIFE WADER project staff with back-up support from the provider. Support, maintenance and hosting (if applicable) will be required for this period. We request proposals for a graded maintenance schedule for this period (based on a provider’s experience of similar website projects), with maintenance / support requirements likely to lessen over time.

Phase 3 ‘AfterLIFE’ – during this period January 2027 to December 2031 the LIFE WADER project will no longer be actively delivering work and the website will be largely static with periodic small updates, therefore maintenance and support requirements during this period will be minimal. A plan to determine frequency of updates during this period will be determined during Phase 2 and before the official end of the delivery period of the project December 2026. Tenders should include costs for this fallow ‘AfterLIFE’ period when hosting will be at a basic level and maintenance requirements minimal.

**Budget**

Our budget is £10k for Phase 1 & 2 identified above to include initial build, phased maintenance and support and hosting (if applicable) for the period to 31 December 2026. This budget must also include all meeting costs contact time and any travel expenses.

We also welcome a proposal of costs for Phase 3, to cover any required maintenance, occasional support and basic level hosting (if applicable) for the period 01 January 2027 to 31 December 2031. These costs may take the total tender costs above the £10K budget indicated above. As project funding will need to be spent by 31 December 2026 phase 3 costs will be allocated separately.

Tenders should include a full breakdown of costs by activity for each time period.

**Q7) We noticed that the contract end date is for April 2024, but the RFQ document separately suggests that the proposal should include hosting, maintenance, support and training until 2031 within the budget. Can I ask you to confirm if that 2031 date is correct?**

A7) I note that the intended contract period has been revised from 05-02-2024 - 28-04-2024 to 05-02-2024 - 31-12-2026.

We will shortly be publishing a revised RFQ document providing further clarification around the issues of timeframe and budget for the different components of the required work; delivery, maintenance, support and hosting. This is in response to receiving a number of questions of clarification around these matters.

**Q8) Could you provide an estimate of the expected monthly traffic to the website? This will help us figure out the hosting capabilities needed.**

A8) It’s really hard to say but we estimate, once promotion begins, we’d be hoping to attract 100 visits (50+ unique) a day as a starting point, but we would anticipate this would increase fairly quickly. We’d like to aim for 200-300 per day after a year.

**Q9) Will your team be supplying all the content, including text, videos and images, for the website?**

A9) Yes, All content for web pages will be provided by the project team. A lot of it has already been developed.

**Q10) Do you require face-to-face meetings, or would it be possible to coordinate all discussions through Zoom?**

A10) Face to face meetings are not an absolute requirement. We think it is nice to meet in person at the inception meeting if practical, but we are open to virtual meetings, certainly for progress updates. Details of how you propose to engage with and update us on your progress should form part of your Contract Management Plan included in your tender.

**Q11) Regarding the pricing details, I noticed an inconsistency between the information on Page 5 and the Pricing Schedule. On Page 5, it states that prices should be submitted in £ sterling, exclusive of VAT. However, the Pricing Schedule seems to indicate that totals should include VAT. Could you clarify if the project budget of £10,000 is meant to be inclusive or exclusive of VAT?**

A11) All costs should be submitted exclusive of VAT. You will have seen that costings should be provided using the ‘Commercial Response Form’ where I see this is noted correctly.

**Q12) I would like to ask you about the need to follow the specific Pricing Schedule outlined on Page 12. Is it mandatory to use this format, or is there flexibility, especially in terms of providing rates for each phase rather than daily rates and the number of days required?**

A12) It is not mandatory to use this format, but you should provide your costs using the ‘Commercial Response Form’. As indicated on this you can provide costs in whatever unit is appropriate, so long as it is clear what that is. You should cost as a minimum for the activities listed in the pricing schedule, though there may be others you need to include that we haven’t thought of.

**Q13) Could you provide the address for the initial meeting, as it wasn't specified in the documentation?**

**A13)** We are based in Newcastle so ideally the inception meeting should take place here and you should cost for that.

**Q14) I would like to understand the eligibility criteria for the participation? We are based in outside the UK. Are we eligible?**

A14) To address your question as far as I am aware there are no restrictions on where your company is based that would prevent you from tendering for the work, however, you will need to accept and comply with the terms and conditions as laid out in the tender documents. Can I also refer you to this website that explains about working with Natural England [Procurement at Natural England - Natural England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement)

**Q15) For the budget of £10k+vat, you've mentioned in the Q&A document that this is based on recently developed sites which have similar outcomes to what you need for LIFE WADER. Can you share these so we can have a better understanding of your expectations?**

A15) Here are a few websites for similar projects:

[Home - LIFE R4ever Kent](https://r4everkent.co.uk/)

[Home - Dynamic Dunescapes](https://dynamicdunescapes.co.uk/)

[Home - Save Our Seabed](https://saveourseabed.co.uk/)

[HOME - Curlew LIFE](https://curlewlife.org/)

**Q16) Why is the deadline the 31st March 2024?**

A16) Our process getting to this stage has been delayed by approximately 6 months already and we are already going into year 3 of the project so we want the website up and running as soon as possible. We believe the timeframe suggested should be sufficient to get a basic site in place that we can start to populate ourselves. If you do not think this timeframe is achievable feel free to suggest otherwise.

**Q17) What do you think about Wordpress as the chosen CMS for the website?**

A17) We have used Wordpress before and are familiar with it and appreciate it is a cheaper option so will happily consider it but we are open to other options.

**Q18) Who are the key decision makers of this project and can we speak with them too?**

As Project Manager I make most of the day-to-day decisions on delivery aspects of the project. On communication and media activities I work with the project Communications Officer. The project has a Project Steering Committee and Project Governance Board both comprising representatives from each of our partners but I wouldn’t necessarily involve them in this level of detail.

**Q19) How many agencies have registered their interest so far?**

A19) We have received enquiries from a number of companies, a handful have formally registered their interest at the time of writing.

**Q20) In the RFQ it states the need for an open-source CMS, which makes sense.  For this we would recommend a solution called Duda which allows for custom coding, and customisation of design etc.  However it is not fully open-source.  I wonder how strict your requirements are for this**?

A20) As far as I understand it our requirements for open source are based around the need for flexibility and a CMS. It needs to be a site that is accessible and easily manageable by our team and not cause us to be reliant on the site developers to make  changes to our website.  I am not familiar with Duda but having had a quick look online, it seems like it might be a suitable option and I think we would be open to considering it if proposed. We will consider all options proposed. At the end of the day the functionality and ease of use of the software will be key for us. You might consider suggesting more than one alternative?

**Q21) I have a question regarding the format for our response. Is there a template we need to fulfil or will you accept a more visual deck that covers your criteria?**

A21) With regard to your submission, there is no format requirement/ template for the technical proposal element, a visual deck will be fine, thank you. Please also ensure you complete and submit the other three documents using the template documents provided:

* completed Commercial Response template
* completed Mandatory Requirements (Annex 1)
* completed Acceptance of Terms and Conditions (Annex 2)

**Q22) I wanted to clarify some specifics regarding the content and accessibility aspects for the Natural England Life Wader website.**

**Q22.1) Availability and Optimization of Images: Are the images intended for the content readily accessible and optimized? If not, will stock images be utilized, and at whose expense**?

A22.1) We will provide all the images, if there any costs for stock images we will cover these.

**Q22.2. Website Accessibility: Regarding the website's accessibility, has content been developed to address elements like alternative text for images and other accessibility requirements outlined in the WCAG 2.1 guidelines (**[**https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/#non-text-content**](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.w3.org%2FTR%2FWCAG21%2F%23non-text-content&data=05%7C02%7CLiz.Humphreys%40naturalengland.org.uk%7Cad89b70d1b2e41cfc63c08dc0df32faf%7C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%7C0%7C0%7C638400585327055818%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Ti3JeO2kNLYOKEFwo7nxAGentUlWaHE5ttaxsr7Q56k%3D&reserved=0)**)?**

A22.2). We will provide all text content including that required to meet accessibility requirements.

**Q22.3. Marketing Assistance Expectations: Does the contracting authority anticipate any assistance with marketing initiatives beyond the setup of Google Analytics and using standard CMS Seo techniques?**

A22.3) We have not identified any further marketing requirements at this time.

**Q22.4. Publication Section, Files and Galleries: Will the publications section require file uploads? If so, what is the anticipated file size? Additionally, if the gallery files have been determined, could you provide the maximum and minimum sizes and confirm if they are optimized for web use?**

A22.4) It is difficult to determine max file size for uploads. The sort of documents we will want to upload would be academic papers, reports/best practice plans, posters and PowerPoint presentations. The latter will contain a number of images, these may be the largest files. Videos will be accessed through our YouTube account so will not require uploading directly.

**Q22.5. Contact Form Data Handling: Could you specify where data from the "Contact Us" and volunteer forms goes and how it's accessed? Also, is this data GDPR compliant, and are there guidelines for its retention or secure deletion?**

A22.5) Contact enquiries will go to our existing enquiries email address. Volunteer forms likely the same. Our data protection team will help us to ensure the necessary data protection is in place including privacy notices etc.

**Q22.6. E-Shot Account and Development Credentials: Do you currently have an E-Shot account, and will development credentials be furnished for testing the API and accessing the API docs?**

A22.6) We do currently have an Eshot account. Specific details relating to the API will be provided to the successful contractor as necessary once the website development contract is in place.

**Q22.7. Content Management: Will you be responsible for providing and maintaining documents such as the privacy policy, terms of use, cookie policy, GDPR compliance, etc., to be uploaded as website content?**

A22.7) Yes, we will be responsible for providing and maintaining any such documents as required.

**Q23) How often will the site be updated?**

A23) Updates will vary, it will unlikely be updated daily during busy active times updates be required each week, at other quieter times updates may only be require once or twice a month. During the AfterLIFE period when the project is officially ended, updates will likely be limited to once every couple of months.

**Q24) Who will be making the updates and will that person change over time?**

A24) Most updates will be made by the project Communications Officer but three staff will need to be able to make updates.