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Request for Quotation

**Chilterns AONB Conservation Board - Enhanced Management and Governance**

##

## Request for Quotation

**Chilterns AONB Conservation Board - Enhanced Management and Governance**

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 address by

Email: hazel.mcdowall@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 7th November 2022

Time: 12:00

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**

hazel.mcdowall@naturalengland.org.uk 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 | 14-October-2022 at 12:00 BST / GMT |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 31-October-2022 at 12:00 BST / GMT |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 07-Nov-2022 at 12:00 BST / GMT |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 15-Nov-2022 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 15-Nov-2022 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration  | 15 Nov-2022 to 31-March-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. All mandatory requirements are set out in Bravo.

#### 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 attached [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/)

**Chilterns AONB Conservation Board - Enhanced Management and Governance Specification**

**1. Background to Natural England**

1.1 Natural England 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.

1.2 Natural England aims for a well-managed Nature Recovery Network across land, water and sea, which creates and protects resilient ecosystems rich in wildlife and natural beauty, enjoyed by people and widely benefiting society.

1.3 Through our core programmes, we aim to achieve resilient landscapes and seas, sustainable development, greener farming and fisheries with an emphasis on connecting people with nature for their own and society’s wellbeing, enjoyment and prosperity.

1.4 For us, nature encompasses natural beauty, wildlife and the geology that underpins landscape character. Hence, a key part of our work relates to supporting the conservation, enhancement, understanding and enjoyment of England's protected landscapes - National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These areas are designated for the exceptional scenic quality of their landscapes - which are the result of centuries of interaction between people and nature.

1.5 We work with farmers and land managers; business and industry; planners and developers; national and local government; interest groups and local communities to help them improve their local environment.

**2. Background to this work**

2.1. The [Landscapes Review](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review/landscapes-review-summary-of-findings) (published September 2019) recognised the exceptional circumstances faced by the Chilterns AONB arising from various factors including intense pressure for development, proximity to significant urban areas and a complex and fragmented local governance situation. The Review made several recommendations that could help address these issues, some of which were specific to the Chilterns, including redesignation as a National Park and/or a single strategic development plan for the area.

2.2 In June 2021, the Environment Secretary George Eustice MP announced a new designations programme for Natural England, which revealed that, while redesignating the Chilterns as a National Park would not be pursued as a solution, two different approaches would be explored. Work is already underway on the first project: to consider extending the designated area of the Chilterns AONB. The second project arose from some reactions to the redesignation proposal and aimed to explore how the management and governance of the AONB might be enhanced as an alternative to becoming a National Park Authority. This need not necessarily be dependent on new legislation or designation processes. Initial discussions have suggested that possible approaches could be developed around:

* Co-creation of a new way of working between stakeholders and service providers in the Chilterns AONB, likely to take a partnership approach,
* Putting more of an emphasis on strategically delivering the AONB Management Plan that is already collectively prepared by stakeholders across the AONB, and
* Maximising what can be achieved within existing national policy and legislation.

It is therefore proposed to develop a programme of collaborative work with partners, stakeholders and service providers, beginning with local authorities (due to their democratic mandate and overall place-shaping[[1]](#footnote-2) role), to co-create a new approach to the management and governance of the Chilterns AONB.

2.2 The following parallel activities could have impacts on how management and governance arrangements in the Chilterns AONB may be enhanced, and this work may also be able to inform their consideration. The project will need to maintain a watching brief on these activities, be prepared to present findings from the project as evidence to inform the activities and be prepared to make use of any new opportunities that they present.

* Defra is responding to the recommendations of the **Landscapes Review** over a similar timeframe, and including taking account of a consultation on that response undertaken in early 2022, which will lead to changes to policy and practice, ultimately including changes to primary legislation that may support the project’s aspirations.
* Natural England (NE) are now also working on the consideration of an **extension to the AONB**. This has the potential to increase the number of stakeholders that may need to be involved in the AONB’s governance. Consideration needs to be given to how early to involve likely new stakeholders.
* Following the Landscapes Review, Defra and Natural England are reviewing and updating the guidance for preparing **AONB Management Plans**.
* The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is continuing their programme of **planning reforms** through the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill and changes anticipated to the National Planning Policy Framework. These will inevitably have implications for management and governance and may also present opportunities to seek changes that would support this project’s outcomes, as well as wider outcomes from the Landscapes Review.
* Chilterns Conservation Board has undertaken its own internal **governance review**. This again takes the pragmatic approach of seeking performance improvements as far as possible without requiring external legislative or policy changes (e.g. to the Establishment Order). This review also looked at how the Board can better engage with stakeholders to increase the influence of the [Chilterns AONB Management Plan.](https://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/management-plan.html)
* There are **other reforms** under consideration (e.g. of Lottery funding) that could provide opportunities of relevance to this project, and regard may need to be had to activities of other Government departments (e.g. DCMS) and agencies (e.g. Historic England, Visit England).

 **3. Outcomes**

3.1 The focus of the project is on how those overall outcomes should be achieved through enhanced management and governance arrangements, working with partners, stakeholders, and service providers in the area.

3.2 Anticipated outcomes of the project are:

* That partners, stakeholders and service providers in the Chilterns AONB are **working together using management and governance arrangements that they have co-created** and agreed.
* That at the centre of these arrangements is a **re-invigorated AONB Management Plan**, which partners, stakeholders and service providers in the Chilterns AONB feel ownership of, have bought into and are committed to delivering through decisions they make and actions they support or undertake themselves.
* That subsequent action or delivery plans make specific reference to the Management Plan where appropriate, and where possible take **a consistent and strategic approach to relevant issues across the AONB** and its setting. In particular, a consistent and strategic approach to development in the AONB and its setting is achieved through development plans, recognising that there are several options to achieve this outcome available through the existing planning system.

**4. Project requirements**

4.1 Natural England would like to commission consultants to deliver the following outputs:

* **Undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise**. Relevant stakeholders will be organisations and individuals, including local authorities and other public, private and voluntary sector bodies in and adjacent to the AONB, who (or who represent others who):
1. Are directly capable of delivering AONB objectives
2. May have an influence (positive or negative) on the delivery of AONB objectives
3. Are able to fund or resource in-kind the delivery of AONB objectives
4. Are ‘consumers’ of the AONB

Note: there may be a two-way flow of information on relevant stakeholders between this project and the parallel AONB Extension project.

* Depending on the outcomes of the stakeholder mapping **convene a workshop(s) of stakeholders** and scope out the extent to which stakeholders are already engaged with the Chilterns AONB Management Plan process and importantly delivery, why they are engaged and, where they are not, identify how this can be facilitated.
* A draft report of the **outputs from the workshop** and **suggested next steps** presented to the Steering Group for comment and input. This should clearly set out what identified measures can be achieved through the agreement of stakeholders and any changes that are needed that can be actioned by stakeholders/Chilterns Conservation Board themselves (e.g. changing internal governance arrangements, schemes of delegation, codes of practice, etc.). presented to the Steering Group, for comment and input. The report should have an eye to other external reforms and opportunities.
* **Set out next steps for the Chilterns Conservation Board** in taking these measures forward including highlighting any additional resources required
* **Develop an ongoing engagement plan** that details future communications and consultation with stakeholders
* **Develop a checklist of actions,** building on what has been learnt through this project, that other AONB Partnerships could use to undertake a review of their own partnership working so that there is effective delivery of the Management Plan.

4.2 It is anticipated that this contract will be desk based with virtual meetings and calls to make regular contact with the contract steering group, consultees and main NE contact and face to face for the workshops, to be held locally in the Chilterns AONB

4.3 The contract steering group will be made up of a small number of officers representing Chilterns AONB Conservation Board, Natural England and Defra. It is expected that the consultants will hold:

* **An inception meeting** with the Steering Group to finalise the scope of the project to ensure close liaison that allows them to input views and information
* A Steering Group meeting, **post stakeholder mapping**, to discuss progress and next steps with workshop(s). E.g. Agree pre workshop(s) style and content.
* A **post workshop(s) meeting,** with the Steering Group**,**  where the workshop outcomes and next steps should be presented.
* **Final meeting**, at which all of the outputs in paragraph 4 are delivered if they haven’t been throughout the life of the contract.

**5. Timetable**

5.1 **PLEASE NOTE –** It is anticipated that this contract will run from XXXX – xxxxxx **only to end no later than 31/03/2023**. A timetable is set out below in section 5.2. Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period. We may at our sole discretion extend this contract to include related or further work. Any extension shall be agreed in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition

5.2 We would like consultants to set out a draft timetable in their quotation, for delivering the outputs in paragraphs 4 and 5, that will be agreed at the initial meeting with the steering group.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Initial meeting with consultants and steering group to agree scope of work  | November 2022, date to be confirmed once appointed |
| Regular meetings between consultants and steering group to agree content, direction and progress | As specified in brief |
| Final steering group meeting  | By end of March2023 |

**6. Supplier skill requirements**

6.1 To cover the work required, we are looking for a professional contractor with a proven track record of stakeholder mapping and workshop facilitation. An understanding of how Statutory Protected Landscape Management Plans are reviewed and delivered would also be desirable. Consultants will be expected to have an understanding of AONBs, their statutory purposes, objectives and management, and the current, and potential future environmental and policy context within which they operate. Local knowledge of the Chilterns AONB although not essential would be desirable.

6.2 Consultants will be expected to have a proven ability to design and carry out a stakeholder mapping and engagement project efficiently, with experience in using a variety of mechanisms and information to engage and work with stakeholders. To be proficient in collating, evaluating and effectively presenting data and findings within reports and presentations.

6.3 The following **generic skills** will also be required for all elements of the work:

* excellent written skills
* Experience of running and facilitating workshops and stakeholder engagement events
* excellent inter-personal and presentational skills
* the ability to meet tightdeadlines whilst maintaining high quality outputs
* identifying risks to project delivery and appropriate mitigation measures
* an awareness of the nature of Chilterns AONB Conservation Board work
* the ability to establish good working relationships with local stakeholders as well as Chilterns Conservation Board, Natural England, and other interested parties

6.4 Suppliers are expected to provide a **quote for the full duration of the project** (all figures to be ex VAT and inclusive of VAT).

**7. Supporting Documentation**

Please supply the following supporting documentation

* VAT registration number (if applicable)
* CVs
* Outline mechanisms for ensuring quality
* Relevant examples of past work with client contact details

**8. Prices**

Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, inclusive of VAT.

**9. Bid format – pricing schedule**

9.1 **Include a pricing schedule** ensuring that costs can clearly be seen against personnel, travel and subsistence, materials, other identified costs, and that these link to core activities/tasks. Example below (adapt as appropriate)

9.2 **VAT** – please confirm whether your business is VAT registered.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Individual | Number of days | Daily rate excluding VAT | Additional costs incl T&S (please specify) | Total excluding VAT |
| 1. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Final total excluding VAT |  |  |  |  |  |
| Final total including VAT (if relevant) |  |  |  |  |  |

**10**. **Evaluation criteria**

10.1 We will award this contract in line with the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) and on quality criteria (highlighted below in 10.2)

Price – 50%

Quality-50%

10.2The following **quality criteria** is weighted in accordance with the importance and relevance attached to each one.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Quality Criteria** | **Weighting (%)** | **To include:**  |
| 1. **Method** What is your proposed methodology to deliver the outlined tasks? Understanding of the key aims and requirements of the project, tasks and intended outputs  | 20 | An initial outline of what material/expertise is to be used and how evidence will be collected, and findings presented Identification of key tasks, with a proposed timeline and milestones. Clear stakeholder engagement plan |
| **2.Staff and skills.** Evidence of previous research skills, knowledge, and experience Key Personnel, their roles, and contributions to the project | 25 | Refer to section 4 CVs and a minimum of two relevant examples of work including names and contact details for these clients/referees The team structure and projected time allocations for all individuals in days, set against your identified main tasks. Link to pricing schedule. (See below)  |
| **3. Understanding of Risk/Constraints**  | 5 | Identify risks and how they will be mitigated |

**10.3 Sustainability**

The successful contractor is expected to pursue sustainability in their operations, thereby ensuring Natural England is not contracting with a supplier whose operational outputs run contrary to Natural England’s objectives. The successful contractor will need to approach the project with a focus on the entire life cycle of the project. The successful contractor is likely to be able to provide a copy of their environmental policy and any environmental accreditation schemes such as ISO 14001 or EMAS which they have been awarded or are working towards.

1. a. Operational Sustainability - Explain to Natural England what your organisation is doing to incorporate sustainability within its operations. This may include any details you are able to provide in relation to steps you may be taking to reduce your carbon footprint.
2. b. Environmental Management - Detail what you will do to assess the environmental impact of completing this project and provide mitigations. Examples may include operational measures to reduce emissions and noise impacts, efficient energy use, minimising the environmental impact of transport in delivery, efficient use of raw materials and minimisation of waste where possible.

**Criteria 1 to 3 will be scored as follows:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Justification** |
| **For a score of hundred (100):**  | Excellent - Response is completely relevant and excellent overall.  The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full. |
| **For a score of seventy (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 fifty (50):**  | Acceptable - Response is relevant and acceptable.  The response provides sufficient evidence to fulfil basic requirements. |
| **For a score of twenty (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 zero (0):**  | Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate response.  Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement. |

**11. Quote/Tender & Contract Timescales**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Action | Date |
| Date of issue of RFQ | 14th October 2022 |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 31st October 2022 |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 07 November 2022 |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 15 November 2022 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 15 November 2022 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration  | 15 November 2022 – 31st March 2023 |

**12. Key NE contact**

* Hazel McDowall, Landscape Senior Advisor, Landscape and Heritage Team, Strategy and Government Advice, Natural England
* Email – hazel.mcdowall@naturalengland.org.uk
* Telephone – 07900 608175

Natural England will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award.

Please invoice Natural England 50% by end of January 2023 and the remaining 50%, after the work is complete at end of March 2023

### 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.

### 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.

**End**

1. Using the 2007 Lyons Inquiry definition, that the purpose of local government was “the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)