

 **INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS**

**BOLSTERING THE BLUES – DEMONSTRATING CENTRE-RIGHT SUPPORT FOR LAND USE AS A CLIMATE CHAMPION AHEAD OF COP26**

**INTRODUCTION**

WWF is undertaking an extensive programme of work, funded by the Quadrature Climate Foundation, to raise awareness of the role of land use and agriculture in tackling climate change.

Alongside raising public awareness, and demonstrating tangible solutions for policy change, the programme of work aims to ensure the UK government acknowledges the importance of the land use sector in tackling climate change. This requires cross-party support and a diverse range of voices calling for action, and we have identified a particular priority to be having this message come from right-of-centre stakeholders by:

* improving awareness and interest in the issues at stake;
* supporting development and understanding of the role parliamentarians can play in facilitating change;
* demonstrating meaningful engagement with WWF’s priorities for achieving net zero agriculture and land use; and
* championing WWF’s priorities with their networks to promote change.

We have already commissioned work to identify key influencers in this area, including MPs, Peers, journalists and columnists, with a particular aim of looking beyond the ‘usual suspects’ in Parliament to ensure our key messages are heard in the current mainstream of the Conservative Party.

We have set an overall target for an intensive advocacy drive between now and COP26 in November, aiming to **recruit a 100-strong network of key centre-right MPs, Peers and influencers who will share in public their support for thriving, productive net-zero landscapes with more abundant and accessible nature.** We will also seek to build cross-party support for such a vision in Wales and Scotland, although engaging at Holyrood and the Sennedd will be led by WWF’s public affairs teams in Wales and Scotland and does not form part of this brief.

We are seeking a well-connected and innovative public affairs consultancy to support us in delivering an extended programme of engagement with right-of-centre audiences in the run-up to COP26 – using the international moment to encourage MPs to hold the government to account on an ambitious domestic agenda for land use.

This work will sit alongside other public affairs advocacy led by the WWF team, aiming to engage smaller groups to champion specific policy areas including the development of Environmental Land Management Schemes, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, the government response to the National Food Strategy, legislative action to reduce nitrogen and methane emissions, the development of core standards for trade, and the future of farm regulation.

WWF works at a UK-level, with devolved offices in Scotland and Wales. The central focus of ‘bolstering the blues’ will be to engage centre-right audiences in Westminster, including MPs representing Scottish and Welsh constituencies. The work will therefore need to align with influencing priorities and objectives in the Sennedd and at Holyrood led by the devolved teams, taking advantage of opportunities to encourage a ‘race-to-the-top’ on land use and climate.

Support for WWF advocacy on the National Food Strategy will also be released to tender in due course.

**CONTEXT**

2021 is a crucial year for nature and climate, with the UK holding the G7 Presidency, hosting UNFCCC COP26, CBD COP15 setting new frameworks for the recovery of nature, the Environment Bill passing through the UK Parliament, and the UN Food Systems Summit coinciding with significant developments in food policy across all nations of the UK.

The UK has put reaching net zero emissions by 2050 into law to help limit global warming to 1.5°C in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. While some sectors such as energy supply are rapidly decarbonising, emissions and removals from land-based sectors are more complex.

In aggregate, agriculture, land use and peatlands were responsible for around 12% of UK emissions (58 MtCO2e) in 2017; of this, emissions from agriculture (mainly CH4 and N2O with some CO2) are down on 1990 levels but have gradually risen for more than a decade.

At the same time, the UK has some of the lowest amounts of biodiversity remaining in the world. The food system is one of the greatest drivers of biodiversity loss in the UK and globally, not least given that farmland makes up 70% of land space in the UK. Many critical carbon rich ecosystems have been destroyed or damaged across land and sea in the process, with some now a net source of greenhouse gas emissions rather than absorbing carbon: 80% of the UK’s peatlands have been degraded and 85% of England’s saltmarsh has been lost in the last century.

The coming two years will see critical moments on the path to reducing net emissions and recovering nature within the land use and food system. New agricultural and trade frameworks will be negotiated in all parts of the UK after the UK’s exit from the EU, while the role of nature in providing climate solutions will be in sharp focus in the run up to COP26 and beyond. Diets are changing, as are public opinions, supply chains and financial frameworks, and there is increasing recognition of the impacts of the food system as a whole on both domestic and global biodiversity.

**MAIN PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

We are seeking a well-connected and innovative public affairs consultancy to support us in delivering an extended programme of engagement in the run-up to COP26 – using the international moment to encourage MPs to hold the government to account on an ambitious domestic agenda for land use.

We have set an overall target for an intensive advocacy drive between now and COP26 in November, aiming to recruit a 100-strong network of key centre-right MPs, Peers and influencers who will share in public their support for thriving, productive net-zero landscapes with more abundant and accessible nature. We will also seek to build cross-party support for such a vision in Wales and Scotland.

We have developed initial plans for advocacy and engagement and are now seeking support to deliver that proposal in an ambitious timeframe, as outlined below. We welcome applications that suggest how best to achieve the objective of engaging 100 MPs and Peers, as well as any feedback on our overall approach to achieving the target.

WWF’s Public Affairs Specialist – Quadrature Lead will work closely with the successful applicant to develop a programme of work that integrates advocacy in Westminster (led and delivered by the applicant), with WWF’s public-facing campaign activity, and work with partners including businesses, environmental NGOs, and other representative groups such as the NFU and CLA.

**WWF’S INITIAL PROPOSAL**

‘Recruit a 100-strong network of key Conservative MPs, Peers and influencers to share, in public, their support for thriving, productive net-zero landscapes with more abundant and more accessible nature.’

Over the course of this campaign we want to produce a **clear, accessible, public-facing statement of support for our objectives.** We could add-up column inches, parliamentary questions, and meetings with MPs and Peers, and have achieved 100 separate interactions with key influencers that may gradually shift the narrative. However, we would not have a specific ‘thing’ to share with government at the end of the campaign that demonstrated widespread support for net-zero land use within Parliament or the political imperative for action to develop policy and/or legislation in 2022.

We therefore propose publishing a public-facing document possibly in the form of a ‘Charter for Land [Use]’ or public letter to the Prime Minister to be signed by MPs and Peers. This would outline key principles for achieving net-zero land use and reducing agricultural emissions all while restoring nature and growing the food we need. It would be framed in broad terms to be easy for MPs to sign.

As a charity a public-facing MP engagement activity must be accessible to all parties to sign and participate in, but our overall objective is to influence centre-right audiences. We therefore propose an initial phase of behind-the-scenes engagement, briefing and meeting key targets and influencers to establish a critical mass of centre-right signatories before making the Charter public. This would be an essential aspect of the first phase of the work for any applicant.

We would then engage constituents to ask their MP to sign the Charter, with a focus on politically significant seats identified through our initial research on targets, and our practical work on the ground to develop ‘blueprints’ for the future of land use. This would feature as part of WWF’s summer campaign to shift land use from ‘Source to Sink’ of emissions. We have commissioned stakeholder mapping research to identify key targets, and we will also focusing on constituencies where WWF has land-use change activities on the ground to engage targets and demonstrate the principles of the Charter in action. The successful applicant would need to consider this targeting in their engagement strategy, and we would particularly value their support in assessing our target list and the sorts of activity (parliamentary questions, oral briefings, events, op-eds, public/private letters) we could engage each target with over the course of the project.

We are also keen to ensure this is not a call from the ‘usual suspects’, and while the work will be WWF led, we are particularly conscious that a joint statement of support for this activity from representative groups such as the NFU or CLA would provide additional weight among centre-right audiences. WWF will be pursuing conversations with these groups to scope the possibility of joint activity or even co-branding of a Charter. The successful applicant will need to be prepared to work with a small group of organisations on Westminster advocacy. It is likely this approach would require a microsite to host the Charter, signatories, and any other resources, and may need to be developed by the applicant.

Alongside engagement with the Charter, we will also seek to engage influential voices within the wider centre-right commentariat – and have had initial conversations with CEN, Onward and the Spectator regarding events and activities. We would welcome suggestions for further engagement and how we could demonstrate a regular drumbeat of calls for action on land-use throughout the campaign. We would particularly want to demonstrate the jeopardy of inaction as well as the political and economic opportunity (investment in land use change will create jobs, support mental health and wellbeing, tackle climate change, restore nature, bring natural capital benefits, reduce costs to farmers, allow Britain to demonstrate global leadership, etc.). Throughout the period we work on Bolstering the Blues we should utilise opportunities to shift the narrative, demonstrating that there is a political imperative for tackling emissions from agriculture and land use.

This year the UK holds the presidency of UNFCCC COP26, as well as chairing the G7. It is a fantastic campaigning opportunity to encourage the UK government to be ambitious domestically, and to press for ambition globally by demonstrating best-practice at home. We therefore would seek to prioritise influencing the government before COP26. Our timeframe is to present the Charter to the Prime Minister on a visit to WWF’s Wild Ingleborough project in late October 2021.

**KEY OUTPUTS AND TIMELINE**

The overall objective is for 100 Conservative MPs, Peers, and influencers to engage with and state their support for WWF’s priorities, potentially through a Charter for Land Use. We would welcome feedback on the feasibility of this ask in the timeframe proposed.

Potential activities:

* Assess WWF stakeholder list and provide recommendations for engagement activity and support delivery of that activity, e.g. co-ordinating parliamentary questions, public/private letters, op-eds/columns, event opportunities.
* Work with WWF PA Specialist on briefings for MPs and Peers on WWF land-use priorities
* Co-ordinate meetings with MPs and Peers for WWF Public Affairs staff and colleagues
* Webhost a charter/open letter
* Engage MPs and Peers to make public statements on the importance land use in tackling climate change (potentially through signing a charter for land use) through meetings, briefings, and possibly a social media engagement strategy
* Co-ordinate media opportunities for target MPs, e.g. op-eds and columns in key fora
* Attend occasional internal WWF meetings to align Westminster activity with local and national campaign priorities

**INDICATIVE TIMELINE**

Tender launched: 25 March 2021

Deadline for proposals: 15 April 2021

Presentations of shortlisted proposals: w/c 19 April 2021

Kick off meeting: w/c 26 April 2021

Wild Ingleborough Project Launch: Mid to late May 2021

Link to WWF Summer campaign: June – September 2021

Present Land Charter/open letter to the Prime Minister – late October 2021

**REPORTING TO:**

Responses and questions should be sent to David Walsh, Public Affairs Specialist – Quadrature Programme, dwalsh@wwf.org.uk, and Becky Spencer, Head of Public Affairs, bspencer@wwf.org.uk.

We recommend that proposals are limited to eight sides in length. In your proposal, please include the following:

* A method statement to explain your proposed approach to carrying out the work.
* A brief project plan, showing key milestones and any interdependencies.
* Details about similar projects you have undertaken or your relevant experience in this field.
* A fee proposal including resource allocations and charging rates for all individuals, and any third-party costs.
* Confirmation that you would be willing to accept the WWF Standard Terms and Conditions as the basis for contracting, these are attached with this invitation.

**BUDGET RANGE:**

We have approximately £70k (including VAT) to support this work.

Please provide your standard rate card and any applicable charity discounts

Shortlisted bidders will be asked to present short pitches of their approach to the WWF team w/c 19 April, and we are able to offer a one-off payment of £1000 to support this.

Thank you for expressing an interest in working with and supporting WWF-UK with this important piece of work.  We look forward to receiving your response.