**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**CEREALS & OILSEEDS DATA & PASSPORT (CODAP) PROJECT (working title)**

**REFERENCE NO: 2020-438**

**CUSTOMER:**  AHDB (Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board)

**RELEASE DATE:** **16 March 2021**

**DATE RESPONSE REQUIRED:** **12 April 2021**

Dear Supplier,

We would like to notify you of a potential upcoming requirement, and by doing so we are keen to understand where the market stands.

This Request for Information (RFI) seeks information relating to the provision of a digital data hub allowing data exchange between participants in combinable crop supply chains, AHDB and the wider industry. Every combinable crop grower, haulier, merchant and processor in the UK will have access to it. Part of this project’s ambition is to replace the current paper passport process for combinable crop movements across the UK.

Please note the following general conditions:

* This RFI will help us to refine the requirements.
* We reserve the right not to proceed with a further competition or direct award. Nothing shall constitute a commitment to order unless we undertake a further competition or direct award.
* Any and all costs associated with the production of such a response either to an RFI or further competition must be borne by the supplier. We will not contribute in any way to meeting production costs of any response.
* Information contained within this document is confidential and must not be revealed to any third party without prior written consent from us.
* No down-selection of potential providers will take place as a consequence of any responses or interactions relating to this RFI.
* We expect that all responses to this RFI will be provided by potential providers in good faith to the best of their ability in the light of information available at the time of their response.
* No information provided by a potential provider in response to this RFI will be carried forward, used or acknowledged in any way for the purpose of evaluating the potential provider, in any subsequent formal procurement process.

# CURRENT SITUATION

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) is a statutory levy board, funded by farmers, growers and others in the supply chain and managed as an organisation independent of both commercial industry and Government.

AHDB has been tasked by representatives of commercial businesses in all parts of the cereals and oilseeds supply chain to look again at how to introduce a digital data hub for the UK industry which will allow data to be shared, including replacing the current paper grain passport. Beyond this, the data hub must be flexible enough to capture additional data over and above the core passport data and allow it to be accessed by others in the supply chain.

The CODAP project builds on an earlier project (eGrain Passport) delivered by AHDB on behalf of industry between 2012 and 2017. That project included:

* Development of a pilot electronic passport system scalable to national requirements consistent with the existing paper passport
* Two-way information flow facilitating data to pass back from processor to grower
* Real-time assurance status checks by connecting to industry databases e.g. Red Tractor and TASCC (Trade Assurance Scheme for Combinable Crops)
* Piloting within milling wheat and malting barley supply chains throughout 2015

Approximately 200 loads of grain were piloted and it proved that electronic passports could work quickly and efficiently. 97% of pilot participants supported the concept of an electronic passport. However at that project’s conclusion, industry bodies were not able to reach agreement on adoption.

# OUR AIMS – WHAT WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND

Having been newly instructed by industry to look again at this project, AHDB wishes to understand how the digital technology landscape has changed since the project ceased in 2017 and what the best and most cost-effective digital solutions are to deliver this.

# KEY REQUIREMENTS

At the requirement’s core is the ability to communicate the current paper passport data through the supply chain in an electronic format. A copy of the existing paper passport can be found here [Access the combinable crops grain passport | AHDB](https://ahdb.org.uk/grain-passport) .

In more detail:

* A central database capable of handling approximately one million grain passports per annum across the UK covering the movement of all types of combinable crops
* Flexible enough to accommodate further data as required by industry e.g. pesticide or nitrogen usage data
* A two-way data flow enabling data to move in both directions through supply chains as required by participants
* A range of access interfaces e.g. web browser, mobile app and systems integration, providing flexibility for participants of all sizes to choose the method that best suits their needs, with an emphasis on data automation wherever possible to remove inefficiency
* Key participants are:
	+ Farmers - despatching grain from farm grain stores or field
	+ Hauliers - contracted to collect grain and deliver to processors or other recipients
	+ Grain merchants - usually the organiser of each load, arranging the haulier and having a contracts with both the farmer and the processor or buyer
	+ Grain processors - usually the first destination for grain, e.g. millers, maltsters, feed compounders and oilseed rape crushers
	+ Off-farm grain stores, e.g. central stores or cooperative stores - acting as both a grain recipient when storing farmers’ grain pre-sale and despatchers when selling grain to processors or other buyers
	+ Ports - acting as recipients and despatchers when grain is imported or exported.
* Integration with all UK farm and trade assurance databases including among others Red Tractor, Scottish Quality Crops (SQC) and TASCC, enabling real-time assurance status reporting
* Able to handle grain movements from farm grain stores to processors and also from field to off-farm grain storage sites at harvest
* The ability for the mobile app to receive data off-line and synchronise later, supporting users loading or delivering grain in remote locations with poor signal
* Administration and management reporting tools for AHDB as system owner and for users, including anonymised and aggregated data export
* Ability for AHDB to easily export information for industry-wide analysis
* Functionality allowing a bureau service to support users remotely
* Appropriate measures to ensure commercially sensitive data is robustly protected and GDPR regulations are fully complied with

**KEY QUESTIONS**

In considering the requirements above, there are a number of key questions that we are looking to answer by undertaking this Request for Information:

1. We have included details of the current paper passport process within Appendix 1. We would like feedback on how we can optimise this process. What is the optimal process or workflow to use for the transition of an electronic passport from one party to another whilst delivering the key requirements outlined above?
2. What is the best available technology to use to deliver an accessible, flexible and easy to use solution for all parts of the UK industry considering the range in business scale and IT capability?
3. What approach to software development is recommended to ensure that development can flex to industry requirements as any piloting and industry testing progresses?
4. How long is likely to be required to deliver:
	1. A beta version capable of being piloted end to end with limited participants in one commodity supply chain
	2. A fully scaled solution capable of being rolled out in all combinable crop supply chains

# WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

In addition to looking for answers to the key questions outlined in the previous section, we ask potential suppliers to outline any relevant experience of delivering projects of this nature within the agriculture or horticulture industry including:

* An overview of their brief
* A summary of the solution
* The contract term
* The name of the client (please withhold if confidential)
* Any lessons learnt

# OUR TIMETABLE

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| **DATE** | **ACTIVITY** |
| 16 March 2021 | Publication of the Request for Information |
| 16 March 2021 | Clarification period starts |
| 1 April 2021 | Clarification period closes and responses issued (if not already done so) |
| 12 April 2021 | Deadline for RFI response submission |
| 13 April – 23 April 2021 | Analysis of RFI responses |
| May 2021 | Confirm next steps to RFI respondents |

# RESPONSE FORMAT

AHDB are looking for suppliers to respond showing innovation and potential solutions against this RFI, along with capability and capacity, whilst offering value for money. If your response includes brochures, you must index where within these documents you are referring to responses against this RFI.

Responses should be a maximum of 10 sides of A4 including appendices and be submitted as a pdf.

# QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

* Potential providers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this RFI document at any time prior to the response deadline. Questions must be submitted via AHDB’s procurement portal Bravo
* To ensure that all potential providers have equal access to information regarding this request for information, responses to questions raised by potential providers will be published in a questions and answers document, which will be emailed to all suppliers included within this RFI. This will be done no later than 1 April 2021.
* Responses to questions will not identify the originator of the question.
* If a potential provider wishes to ask a question or seek clarification without the question and answer being published in this way, then the potential provider must notify us and provide its justification for withholding the question and any response. If we do not consider that there is sufficient justification for withholding the question and the corresponding response, the potential provider will be invited to decide whether:
	+ the question\clarification and the response should in fact be published; or
	+ It wishes to withdraw the question\clarification.

# GENERAL CONTACT POINT FOR THIS RFI

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| **RFI Lead** |
| Name: | Bethany Ridge |
| Email Address: | procurement@ahdb.org.uk |

# APPENDIX 1

The diagram below shows the existing paper passport workflow through supply chains for the most common type of grain movement. This is where the movement is arranged by grain merchants (agent) who have separate contracts with the sender (typically a farmer) and the recipient (typically a processor), and the load is moved by a haulier (transporter).

