Request for Quotation

## NC 76 Task 1.4 Fish and Cephalopod Scuba Surveys South Cornwall 2024

**14 May 2024**

Reference: mNCEA Inshore Fish Dive Surveys 2024

Request for Quotation

mNCEA Inshore Fish Dive Surveys 2024

You are invited to submit a quotation for the requirement described in the specification, Section 2.

Please confirm by email, receipt of these documents and whether you intend to submit a quote or not.

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

Email: [joshua.crane@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:joshua.crane@naturalengland.org.uk) and [adam.waugh@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:adam.waugh@naturalengland.org.uk)

Date: 29/05/2024

Time: 17:00

Ensure you include the name of the quotation and ‘Final Submission’ in the subject field to make it clear that it is your response.

Contact Details and Timetable

Joshua Crane will be your contact for any questions linked to the content of the quote or the process. Please submit any clarification questions via 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 | 14/05/2024at17:00 BST |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 25/05/2024 at 17:00 BST |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 29/05/2024at17:00 BST |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 02/06/2024 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 02/06/2025 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration | 30/09/2024 for completion of survey (subject to extension due to adverse weather conditions)  30/11/2024 for delivery of data and report |

Section 1: General Information

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 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, acting as part of Natural England who is the Contracting Authority. |
| “Contract” | Means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier. |
| “Response” | means the information submitted by a supplier in response to the RFQ. |
| “RFQ” | means this Request for Quotation and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to suppliers. |

Conditions applying to the RFQ

You should examine your Response and related documents ensuring it is complete and in accordance with the stated instructions prior to submission.

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

By submitting a Response, you, the supplier, are deemed to accept the terms and conditions provided in the RFQ. Confirmation of this is required in Annex 2.

Failure to comply with the instructions set out in the RFQ may result in the supplier’s exclusion from this quotation process.

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.

Self-Declaration and Mandatory Requirements

The RFQ includes a self-declaration response (Annex 1) which covers basic information about the supplier, as well as any grounds for exclusion. If you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated.

Any mandatory requirements will be set out in Section 2, Specification of Requirements and, if you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated.

Clarifications

Any request for clarification regarding the RFQ and supporting documentation must be submitted via email no later than the deadline for clarifications set out in the Timetable. The Authority shall be under no obligation to respond to queries raised after the clarification deadline.

The Authority will respond to all reasonable clarifications as soon as possible but cannot guarantee a minimum response time. The Authority will publish all clarifications and its responses to all suppliers via email unless deemed commercially sensitive.

If a supplier believes that a request for clarification is commercially sensitive, it should clearly state this when submitting the clarification request. However, if the Authority considers either that:

* the clarification and response are not commercially sensitive; and
* all suppliers may benefit from its disclosure,

then the Authority will notify the supplier (via email), and the supplier will have an opportunity to withdraw the request for clarification by sending a further message requesting the withdrawal of the clarification request. If not withdrawn by the supplier within 2 working days of the Authority’s notification, the Authority may publish the clarification request and its response to all suppliers and the Authority shall not be liable to the supplier for any consequences of such publication.

The Authority reserves the right to seek clarification of any aspect of a quotation and/or provide additional information during the evaluation phase to carry out a fair evaluation. Where the Authority seeks clarification on any aspect of the quotation, the supplier must respond within the timeframe requested by the Authority.

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 via email.

Suppliers may modify their quotation prior to the deadline for Responses. No Responses may be modified after the deadline for Responses.

Suppliers may withdraw their quotations at any time by submitting a notice via the email to the named contact.

Conditions of Contract

The Authority’s Standard Good and Services Terms & Conditions (used for purchases under £50k) can be located on the [[Natural England Website](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement)] (click for link) and will be applicable to any contract awarded as a result of this quotation process. The Authority will not accept any changes to these terms and conditions proposed by a supplier.

Suppliers should note that the quotation provided by the successful bidder will form part of the Contract.

Prices

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

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.

Further to the Government’s transparency agenda, all UK Government organisations must advertise on Contract Finder in accordance with the following publication thresholds:

* Central Contracting Authority’s: £12,000
* Sub Central Contracting Authority’s and NHS Trusts: £30,000

For the purpose of this RFQ the Authority is classified as a Central Contracting Authority with a publication threshold of '£12,000' inclusive of VAT.

If this opportunity is advertised via Contracts Finder, we are obliged to publish details of the awarded contract including who has won the contract, the contract value, and indicate whether the winning supplier is a small and medium-sized enterprise (“SMEs”) or voluntary organisation or charity. A copy of the contract must also be published with confidential information redacted.

By submitting a Response, 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 supplier 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.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

The Client is striving to create a diverse and inclusive working environment where every individual has equality of opportunity to progress and to apply their unique insights to making the UK a great place for living. The Service Provider is expected to respect this commitment in all dealings with Natural England staff and service users.

Suppliers are expected to;

* support Defra group to achieve its Public Sector Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and to support delivery of [Defra group’s Equality & Diversity Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024).
* meet the standards set out in the [Government’s Supplier Code of Conduct](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplier-code-of-conduct)
* work with Defra group to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion impacts are addressed (positive and negative) in the goods, services and works we procure, barriers are removed and opportunities realised.

Sustainable Procurement

Addressing global sustainability impacts and realising additional community benefits within commercial activity is core to Defra group’s approach, working with its supply chain is key to achieving sustainable outcomes. In addition to supporting Defra group to meet its outcomes we look to understand and reduce negative sustainability impacts associated with our commercial activity and realise benefits.

The Client encourages its suppliers to share these values, work to address negative impacts and realise opportunities, measure performance and success.

Suppliers are expected to have an understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals, the interconnections between them and the relevance to the Goods, Services and works procured on the Client’s behalf.

Conflicts of Interest

The concept of a conflict of interest includes but is not limited to any situation where an Involved Person or Relevant Body has directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure and/or affect the integrity of the contract award.

We expect suppliers to mitigate appropriately against any real or perceived conflict of interest through their work with government. A supplier with a position of influence gained through a contract should not use that position to unfairly disadvantage any other supplier or reduce the potential for future competition

Where the supplier is aware of any circumstances giving rise to a conflict of interest or has any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise you should inform the Authority of this as soon as possible (whether before or after they have submitted a quotation). Tenderers should remain alert to the possibility of conflicts of interest arising at all stages of the procurement and should update the Authority if any new circumstances or information arises, or there are any changes to information already provided to the Authority. Failure to do so, and/or to properly manage any conflicts of interest may result in a quotation being rejected.

Provided that it has been carried out in an open, fair and transparent manner, routine pre-market engagement carried out by the Authority should not represent a conflict of interest for the supplier.

Section 2: The Invitation

Specification of Requirements

## Introduction

This project will support the drive for new approaches to decision making, based on the Natural Capital approach through the marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) Programme. This means using comprehensive evidence of the benefits provided by marine habitats and species (food, carbon storage, well-being etc.) to give a full picture of the trade-offs associated with making complex environmental decisions concerning the marine environment.

During the 2017/18 assessment of the state of the UK marine evidence gathering programmes, a major evidence gap was identified in relation to inshore fish (UKMMAS, 2018). This gap relates to the overall fish diversity, species distribution and population (or stock) levels for all quota and non-quota species that occur predominantly within the 12 nm inshore area, especially those that occur predominantly in waters of <20 m water depth and so are not sampled representatively by existing trawl surveys. Filling this gap will facilitate improved assessments relating to the status of fish in English waters for the purposes of assessing progress toward Good Environmental Status which was previously based largely on catch data targeting commercial stocks in deeper waters.

The UK Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy outlines the three types of monitoring strategies (Kröger & Johnston, 2016). Operational monitoring seeks to measure state and relate observed change to possible causes, while investigative monitoring seeks to investigate the cause of change. These two types of monitoring strategies aim to answer specific questions that are usually discrete in both space and time.

Sentinel monitoring aims to measure rate and direction of long-term change. This type of monitoring provides the context to distinguish directional trends from short-scale variability in space and time by representing variability across space at any one time and documenting changes over time. To achieve this objective efficiently, a long-term commitment to regular and consistent data collection is necessary. This means time-series must be established as their power in identifying trends is far superior to any combination of independent studies. It is this monitoring type that will help achieve the goals of the mNCEA programme and the aims and objectives of this programme.

The sentinel monitoring programme will be based on broadscale habitats within discrete inshore locations, using multiple methods, designed to deliver the aims and of the mNCEA programme for inshore fish and cephalopods. This is a request for quotation for the scuba diving element of this multi-method programme.

### Site information and survey area

This survey will collect baseline data on inshore fish and cephalopods from subtidal seagrass beds, kelp forests and maerl beds in South Cornwall (St. Austell Bay and Veryan Bay areas). Suggested survey areas, identified from broadscale habitat data, are shown in Figure 1.

A map of a sea

Description automatically generated

Figure 1 - Map of South Cornwall survey area including relevant habitat types.

Exact survey sites will be confirmed in conjunction with the contractor once the contract is awarded. Dive survey locations are habitat-specific, with two sites suggested per habitat type:

* 11 &12 – kelp
* 14 &15 – seagrass
* 13 &16 - maerl

### Previous Surveys

There are no published studies utilising scuba divers to conduct inshore fish surveys in South Cornwall (St. Austell Bay and Veryan Bay).

In 2023, the Natural England Dive Unit undertook seagrass monitoring and some fish surveys in St. Austell Bay. The results of this survey are being analysed – the data can be shared with the contractor. The NE Dive Unit also undertook maerl surveys in Falmouth Bay to St. Austell Bay SPA in 2023. The report is in draft but will be shared with the winning supplier upon contract award. Full reference list of surveys and reports available in Appendix 1.

## Aims & Objectives

Natural England intends to commission ecological dive survey work ideally between August – September 2024 to obtain fish and cephalopods data in South Cornwall.

The key aims of this project are:

1. To provide a team of scientific divers to undertake the fish and cephalopod transect surveys. Natural England may be able to provide 1 diver to supplement the contractors team. Under this project, the winning supplier will act as ‘Dive Contractor’ and Natural England will act as the ‘Client’ in line with Diving at Work Regulations 1997.
2. Record the biological and environmental data on each location following the requirements in Contract Requirements and Appendix 2: Data Requirements. Details of the required determinants will be provided following the contract award.
3. Produce a dive survey report, detailing sampling methods, survey design, observations and recommendations which will inform future assessments of inshore fish and cephalopod populations as part of the marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) approach.

The survey aims to answer the following questions for fish and cephalopods (see Appendix 2 for further details):

* Which species (higher taxonomic rank for cephalopods may be required) are observed using seagrass/kelp/maerl habitats?
* What is the relative abundance of each species? (e.g. maximum number of individuals seen at one time on dive, or sightings per unit time)
* Where are fish and cephalopod species observed within the habitat? (e.g. are they present within the structure/vegetation or swimming in the water column over the habitat?)
* Are specific behaviours observed that help demonstrate why the habitat is important for each species? (e.g. are fish seen feeding/foraging, taking refuge in vegetation, burrowing, wrasse cleaning stations, swimming in water column etc.)
* Are fish or cephalopod eggs or nests observed?
* Determine, where possible, approximate sizes (and inferred life stages) of recorded species (see Appendix 2: Data Requirements).

## Contract Requirements

Contractors will be required to:

* Undertake survey planning and preparation.
* Provide a team of suitably qualified and experienced scientific divers and supervisor to undertake the survey. Note: Natural England may be able to provide 1 diver to supplement the contractors team. Under this project, the winning supplier will act as ‘Dive Contractor’ and Natural England will act as the ‘Client’ in line with Diving at Work Regulations 1997. The survey must be carried out in accordance with Approved Code of Practice for Scientific and Archaeological Diving.
* The survey must be completed in August 2024. Note: a provisional booking of the Celtic Cat MCA coded dive vessel (Porthkerris Divers) has been made for the dates (12th – 15th August and 27th – 30th August), has been separately contracted by Natural England. The winning contractor may choose to use this vessel or one of their own. Accommodation is expected to be booked by the contractor.
* Collect data using a belt transect method. Suggested methods are set out in Appendix 3; the contractor may adapt this methodology in agreement with Natural England. Videography and imagery should also be collected as part of the dive survey.
* Record information about seahorses if found whilst undertaking surveys, including taking photographs without flash. Inform Natural England as soon as possible after making the record and comply with the terms of Natural England’s or the contractor’s own seahorse license.
* Report the detailed findings of the project Marine Recorder files, MEDIN compliant metadata, a confidence assessment of the data outputs and standard survey imagery.
* Provide a survey report which must:
* Detail the work undertaken and perform basic statistical analyses of data. Please note full multivariate analyses will be undertaken separately to this contract, comparing inshore fish data from across a suite of habitats using multiple survey techniques (BRUV, fish trips, eDNA and dive surveys).
* Evaluate the effectiveness of the data collection method, techniques and technical equipment. This should include limitations and recommendations for future work.
* Record information about seahorses if found whilst undertaking surveys, including taking photographs without flash. Inform Natural England as soon as possible after making the record and comply with the terms of Natural England’s or the contractor’s own seahorse license.
* Report the detailed findings of the project in succinct and clear final reports, including appropriate GIS outputs, Marine Recorder files, MEDIN compliant metadata, a confidence assessment of the data outputs and standard survey imagery. Supply a dataset including full species list.

A broadscale habitat map of South Cornwall is shown in Figure 1 with suggested areas for surveying. Natural England expects the contractor to survey seagrass beds, maerl beds and kelp, suggesting two sites per habitat. The final dive site locations will be agreed in advance between the contractor and Natural England during start up meetings, as both BRUV and fish trap surveys will occur on the same sites (undertaken by separate contractor). Natural England has recent data for maerl and seagrass bed distribution. Information from local Seasearch dives and acoustic data will be used to inform the final locations for surveying in kelp. Seagrass habitat should be prioritised first. Contractors should provide quotes based on this information; we would expect dive surveys to take no longer than 4 days.

## Methods

### Pre-survey Deskwork

Before the survey is carried out the contractor will discuss any pre-survey work with the Project Officer. This should include checking site information, identifying sources of relevant information and finalising diving methods.

To ensure the successful contractor complies with the Diving at Work Regulations and appropriate Health and Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice; is competent for the work and aware of hazards associated with the project; and are maintaining full records of all such projects; a Diving Project Plan and risk assessment must be submitted by the contractor to the Natural England Diving Officer for approval. Copies of qualifications, medical certificates and first aid certificates should be provided to the Natural England Diving Officer by the Contractor.

### Site Access

Natural England will obtain permission from seabed owners, Port Authorities, or leaseholders for survey work as necessary. 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.

### Protected Species & Licensing

Natural England is currently in the process of renewing an application for a licence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to disturb short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus)* and spiny seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*) for the purpose of scientific research. Once the licence is granted, any volunteer or contractor must be accompanied by the Natural England licence holder or a named agent when diving, as only the licence holder or named agents are authorised to carry out the licence activities. If the contractor is not accompanied by Natural England staff, the contractor is expected to have their own licence.

Natural England will ensure that any other relevant marine and protected species licences and legal requirements (such as a Habitats Regulations Assessment) for the survey have been attained and are valid before the survey commences.

### Diving Operations

The contractor will undertake the survey using a team of fully equipped HSE divers. To reduce costs and provide site knowledge and relevant expertise, NE wishes to supply one or two appropriately qualified (on open circuit scuba) and experienced HSE commercial divers for the duration of the survey. The successful contractor will be expected to include these divers in all pre-survey briefings and any training sessions. Potential suppliers should submit quotes for both a full dive team and a dive team supplemented with NE staff; upon successful award of the contract, these options will be discussed during the planning stages with the Project Officer.

Natural England expects data to be collected over a 3-4 day period. Team size depends on survey design proposed by the contractor; a minimum team of six would allow for one supervisor, a surface stand-by diver, and two survey pairs, but a larger team of eight or more would allow for more data to be collected.

Use a belt transect method to assess inshore fish and cephalopod populations at fixed areas within specific habitats (seagrass, kelp and maerl). Suggested methods are set out in Appendix 3.

### Data Analysis

Natural England expects robust and appropriate statistical analysis to be completed, and the results presented and discussed.

### H & S Requirements

All diving practice will follow the HSE Approved Codes of Practice for Scientific and Archaeological Diving (Health and Safety Executive, 2014). These comply with the Diving at Work Regulations 1997 issued by the Health and Safety Executive. In accordance with these regulations all divers are qualified to HSE Pt IV or equivalent CMAS 3\*.

Prior to the survey Natural England will require the provision of:

* Dive project plan.
* Emergency procedure.
* Risk assessment.

**Weather Downtime & Contingency**

Weather downtime should be defined as those periods during diving operations where the influence of weather conditions results in a halt to any monitoring due to the impact on data quality and/or operational safety. To ensure the safety of the Contractor and integrity of the project, good, clear, documented communications with (Joshua Crane) is essential. Any permission to accrue weather downtime costs given must be in writing or by email from (Joshua Crane) to the Contractor. Any charges for weather downtime where no evidence of prior approval exists will not be approved and will not be reimbursed. Approved weather downtime maybe charged to Natural England at an Operational Weather Downtime Rate:

Table 1 Downtimes and Rates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Situation | Rate |
| Not immobilised | No costs |
| Other | Maximum 2 days by prior agreement with Joshua Crane |

## Outputs – Products and Timescales

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by Joshua Crane and Adam Waugh.

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/).

Data must be interpreted, analysed and presented in light of the overarching hypotheses for each contract. Contractors should pay particular consideration to the data and GIS required formats for information compatibility including MEDIN metadata standards and Marine Recorder provision.

All interpreted products following data analysis include:

* All GIS datasets need to be provided in ESRI ArcGIS format compatible with ArcGIS version 10.2 and have attached metadata.
* As specified in the [MESH DEF](http://www.emodnet-seabedhabitats.eu/default.aspx?page=2067), data files must be provided as ESRI Shapefiles using geographic coordinates (lat/long) and the WGS84 datum. If the datasets supplied are in other projections, transformation using the appropriate petroleum (EPSG) transformation should be carried out as part of the data formatting procedure.

Natural England endorses the MEDIN initiative. Any data gathered/derived as part of this project must be submitted to Natural England in a way which expedites the MEDIN data archiving process through Data Archive Centres (DACs) with metadata meeting the MEDIN metadata discovery standard ([MEDIN discovery metadata standard](http://www.oceannet.org/marine_data_standards/medin_disc_stnd.html)). A MEDIN compliant metadata XML file must be provided for each survey. Natural England will supply the ‘MEDIN guidance for contractors’ document to successful contractors at the mini-tender stage.

All sample data must be entered into [Marine Recorder Online](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjfoorX9e6FAxUjQUEAHXk9AjQQFnoECBkQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.marine-recorder.org.uk%2F&usg=AOvVaw3p3XluRyhPsg1AERMIbFmh&opi=89978449). The Natural England Project Officer will create the survey in MRO and grant access to the contractor to input survey data. Natural England will supply a ‘Marine Recorder guidance for contractors’ document to successful contractors. Contractors should inform the Project Officer when the dataset has been entered, who will QA the survey before signing off.

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

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 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))

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 dive survey, the first of two staged payments for this contract will be released. Final payment will be issued upon completion of data uploads.

## Contract details

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

* Project support from dedicated Project Officer
* Opportunity to feedback and discuss progress and the project
* Supporting GIS datasets (if required) under licence for use in this contract:
  + Base map data from [Ordnance Survey](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/)
  + Aerial photography from [Next Perspectives](http://www.nextperspectives.co.uk/)
  + S-57 vector data from the UK Hydrographic Office (in ArcGIS format)\*
  + 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 obtain access to the GI datasets listed above: <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. All data will be made available by Natural England 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.

Payment

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

The Authority’s preference is for all invoices to be sent electronically, quoting a valid Purchase Order number. Invoices will be expected subject to deliverables and milestones detailed in Table 2 Timeline for project delivery.

Table 2 Timeline for project delivery

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Event** | **Date** | **Payment schedule** |
| Completion of Project Plan and Risk Assessment | 6 weeks prior to survey starting |  |
| Completion of dive preparation |  |  |
| Dive survey | August - September 2024 | Milestone 1 payment |
| Data uploaded, video files and site/sample notes provided to NE. | 30 November 2024 | Milestone 2 payment |

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.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 6 months to end no later than 30/11/2024. 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 writing in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

# Evaluation Methodology

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

Technical – 60%

Commercial – 40%

**Evaluation criteria**

Evaluation weightings are 60 % technical and 40% commercial, the winning tenderer will be the highest scoring combined score.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Award Criteria | Weighting (%) | Evaluation Topic & Weighting | Sub-Criteria | Weighted Question |
| Technical | 30% | Quality of proposal for full data upload | Methodology and data collection | 2 Questions  Q1.1 Will the proposed survey method be completable and collect the data required by Authority?  (50% of technical score available)  Q1.2 Will the data collected be deliverable in the format required and address information gaps outlined by Authority?  (50% of technical score available) |
| Technical | 30% | Key Personnel – Experience and skill of divers | Relevant skill to sites, communities and species to be surveyed. | Q2 Judged by the Project officer, do the diver CVs offer the relevant ability to perform the necessary survey?  (100% of technical score available) |
| Commercial | 40% | Cost of delivery of the project. | Rank in cost order | Where does the cost of the project proposed rank compared to other proposals for this project?  (100% of commercial score available) |

Technical (**60**% total)

Technical evaluations will be based on responses to specific questions covering key criteria which are outlined below. Scores for questions will be based on the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description | Score | Definition |
| Very good | 100 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. There are no weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority complete confidence that all the requirements will be met to a high standard. |
| Good | 70 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains minor weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that all the requirements will be met to a good standard. |
| Moderate | 50 | Addresses most of the requirements with most of the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains moderate weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that most of the requirements will be met to a suitable standard. |
| Weak | 20 | Substantially addresses the requirements but not all and provides supporting information that is of limited or no relevance or a methodology containing significant weaknesses and therefore raises concerns for the Authority that the requirements may not all be met. |
| Unacceptable | 0 | No response or provides a response that gives the Authority no confidence that the requirement will be met. |

Technical evaluation is assessed using the evaluation topics and sub-criteria stated in the Evaluation Criteria section above.

Separate submissions for each technical question should be provided and will be evaluated in isolation. Tenderers should provide answers that meet the criteria of each technical question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Quality of proposal for full data upload | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q1.1 Will the proposed survey method be completable and collect the data required by Authority? | Provide a statement on availability and capacity to mobilise a survey team.  Please supply a proposed schedule of work, stating the timescales you will be able to execute and deliver the products specified above. See Section Timeline for project delivery |
| Q1.2 Will the data collected be deliverable in the format required and address information gaps outlined by Authority? | Outline a report proposal including relevant data collection methods, analysis and discussion and recommendation sections. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key Personnel | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q2 Judged by the Project officer, do the diver CVs offer the relevant ability to perform the necessary survey? | Provide CVs for the survey team. Diver C.V.s should demonstrate appropriate skills and capability in identifying fish species |

Commercial (**40**%)

The Contract is to be awarded as a Fixed Price which will be paid according to the completion of the deliverables stated in the Specification of Requirements.

Please complete the table below for the costings and create new lines where necessary.

**Contractors should provide two alternative costings for 2 days of surveying (seagrass) and 3 days of surveying (seagrass and kelp)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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 *(Provide breakdown to include survey vessel incl. fuel, mooring, any dive consumables)* |  |  |  |  |
| **3** | Fieldwork personnel *(Breakdown to include day rate of divers, supervisors, skipper etc.)*  NE would like to provide 1 diver, but please include an additional quote for a full team if NE are not able to provide |  |  |  |  |
| **4** | Travel and subsistence costs for field work personnel. (NE will pay for own divers) |  |  |  |  |
| **5** | Data analysis, GIS and reporting (*Provide breakdown to include 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** |  |

Suppliers are required to submit a total cost to provide the deliverables stated in the Specification of Requirements. In addition to this the Commercial Response template must be completed to provide a breakdown of the whole life costs against each deliverable used in the delivery of this requirement.

Calculation Method

The method for calculating the weighted scores is as follows:

* Commercial

Score = (Lowest Quotation Price / Supplier’s Quotation Price) x 40% (Maximum available marks)

* Technical

Score = (Bidder’s Total Technical Score / Highest Technical Score) x 60% (Maximum available marks)

The total score (weighted) (TWS) is then calculated by adding the total weighted commercial score (WC) to the total weighted technical score (WT): WC + WT = TWS.

Information to be returned.

Please note, the following information requested must be provided. Incomplete tender submissions may be discounted.

Please complete and return the following information:

* completed Commercial Response template
* separate response submission for each technical question (in accordance with the response instructions)
* completed Mandatory Requirements (Annex 1)
* completed Acceptance of Terms and Conditions (Annex 2)

Award

Once the evaluation of the Response(s) is complete all suppliers will be notified of the outcome via email. 'The successful supplier will be issued the contract, incorporating their Response, for signature. The Authority will then counter sign'.

Annex 1 Mandatory Requirements

Part 1 Potential Supplier Information

Please answer the following self-declaration questions in full and include this Annex in your quotation response.

Part 1.1 Potential Supplier Information:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 1.1(a) | Full name of the potential supplier submitting the information |  |
| 1.1(b) | Registered office address (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(c) | Company registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(d) | Charity registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(e) | Head office DUNS number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(f) | Registered VAT number |  |
| 1.1(g) | Are you a Small, Medium or Micro Enterprise (SME)? | (Yes / No) |

Note: See EU definition of SME <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en>

Part 1.2 Contact details and declaration

By submitting a quotation to this RFQ I declare that to the best of my knowledge the answers submitted and information contained in this document are correct and accurate.

I declare that, upon request and without delay you will provide the certificates or documentary evidence referred to in this document.

I understand that the information will be used in the selection process to assess my organisation’s suitability to be invited to participate further in this procurement.

I understand that the authority may reject this submission in its entirety if there is a failure to answer all the relevant questions fully, or if false/misleading information or content is provided in any section.

I am aware of the consequences of serious misrepresentation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 1.2(a) | Contact name |  |
| 1.2(b) | Name of organisation |  |
| 1.2(c) | Role in organisation |  |
| 1.2(d) | Phone number |  |
| 1.2(e) | E-mail address |  |
| 1.2(f) | Postal address |  |
| 1.2(g) | Signature (electronic is acceptable) |  |
| 1.2(h) | Date |  |

Part 2 Exclusion Grounds

Part 2.1 Grounds for mandatory exclusion

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 2.1(a) | Please indicate if, within the past five years you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation been convicted anywhere in the world of any of the offences within the summary below. | |
|  | Participation in a criminal organisation. | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Corruption. | ((Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Fraud. | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Money laundering or terrorist financing | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
| 2.1(b) | If you have answered yes to question 2.1(a), please provide further details.  Date of conviction, specify which of the grounds listed the conviction was for, and the reasons for conviction.  Identity of who has been convicted  If the relevant documentation is available electronically please provide the web address, issuing authority, precise reference of the documents. |  |
| 2.1 (c) | If you have answered Yes to any of the points above have measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (i.e. Self-Cleaning) | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(d) | Has it been established, for your organisation by a judicial or administrative decision having final and binding effect in accordance with the legal provisions of any part of the United Kingdom or the legal provisions of the country in which the organisation is established (if outside the UK), that the organisation is in breach of obligations related to the payment of tax or social security contributions? | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(e) | If you have answered yes to question 2.3(a), please provide further details. Please also confirm you have paid or have entered into a binding arrangement with a view to paying, the outstanding sum including where applicable any accrued interest and/or fines. |  |

Part 2.2 Grounds for discretionary exclusion

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 2.2(a) | The detailed grounds for discretionary exclusion of an organisation are set out on this [webpage](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551130/List_of_Mandatory_and_Discretionary_Exclusions.pdf), which should be referred to before completing these questions.  Please indicate if, within the past three years, anywhere in the world any of the following situations have applied to you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation | |
| 2.2(b) | Breach of environmental obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(c) | Breach of social obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(d) | Breach of labour law obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(e) | Shown significant or persistent deficiencies in the performance of a substantive requirement under a prior public contract, a prior contract with a contracting entity, or a prior concession contract, which led to early termination of that prior contract, damages or other comparable sanctions? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2 (f) | If you have answered Yes to any of the above, explain what measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (Self Cleaning) |  |

Annex 2 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

I/We accept in full the terms and conditions appended to this Request for Quote document.

Company \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## 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>

Doggett, M. and Northen, K.O. 2024. Fal, Helford and St Austell Bay maerl habitat surveys 2023. [NECRXXX]. Natural England. Unpublished, but will be made available for the July 2024 survey.

Franco, A., Barnard, S. and Smyth, K. (2020). An assessment of the viability of fish monitoring techniques for use in a pilot approach in SW England. NECR 270

Kröger, K. and Johnston, C. (2016) The UK Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy (version 4.1). JNCC, Peterborough

Jenkin, A., Street, K., Matthews, R., Trundle, C. and Naylor H. (2016). Verifying acoustic signals for habitat classification within St. Austell Bay, Veryan Bay and Gerrans Bay. Annex 11. Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Cornwall IFCA), Hayle. Available at: <https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/17099/sitedata/Research_Reports/StAustellGerransVeryanDDVSSS2016-ANNEX-11.pdf>

Jenkin, A., Trundle, C., Sturgeon, S., Daniels, C. and Street, K. (2023). Fal and Helford Drop Down Video Maerl Habitat Survey Report. Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Cornwall IFCA), Hayle (Accessed 07/06/2023 <https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/17099/sitedata/Research_Reports/22F-H-DDV-Maerl-SurveyFINAL.pdf>)

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

Katara, I., Peden, W. J., Bannister, H., Ribeiro, J., Fronkova, L., Scougal, C., Martinez., R., Downie, A. L. and Sweeting, C. J. 2021. Conservation hotspots for fish habitats: A case study from English and Welsh waters. *Regional Studies in Marine Science*, *44*, p.101745.

Turnbull, L, Benson, A, Sotheran, I, and Aldis, C. 2024 Maerl Mapping Survey St Austell Bay, Report for Natural England. Envision, Report No. 20240328. In prep. Will be available for survey in July 2024.

## Appendix 2: Data Requirements

In line with the data suggestions, guidance for how to collect data in line with MEDIN and NE guidelines can be found here:

[Monitoring methods for assessing inshore fish communities - NECR269 (naturalengland.org.uk)](https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4755646568464384)

[MEDIN guidelines | Marine Environmental Data and Information Network](https://medin.org.uk/data-standards/medin-data-guidelines#:~:text=Data%20Guidelines%20provide%20a%20list,are%20arranged%20below%20by%20theme.)

<https://medin.org.uk/sites/medin/files/documents/medin_transect_survey_4_9.xlsx>

Data to be collected:

Fish and cephalopod data:

* Species present (to species level where possible)
* Abundance of each species (number of individuals)
* Estimate of individual length measurements (useful to identify indicative life stages e.g. < 5 cm, 6 - 10 cm, 11 - 15 cm etc.)

Sampling data:

* Date and time of sampling and sampler names
* GPS site locations (start and end of transects)
* Method used and replicate number
* Sampling unit effort should be recorded for data standardisation, including approximate length/width height of dive transects
* Underwater forms (if used) to be retained/ photographed

Supporting data

* Tidal conditions, sea state, prevailing weather conditions
* Water depth, water temperature (if possible dissolved oxygen % saturation)
* Underwater visibility, and supplementary notes on habitat characteristics, and variability along the transect, information on fish-habitat association

Imagery and videography

* Reviewer(s) of imagery/video footage
* Hardware and software used to review camera footage including length estimates of fish seen (if undertaken)
* Species and counts seen on camera footage recorded against time from start (to allow for comparison of dive observations and camera observations)

## Appendix 3: Methods

Proposed methods are outlined below, taken from Doggett *et al*. 2022. Changes to the methods may be made in advance of the survey with agreement of Natural England. Please note the same methods will be replicated in another survey this year.

[NE Commissioned report (NECR)\_Plymouth Fish Surveys 2022.docx](https://defra.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/WorkDelivery2763/20222023%20Projects/Inshore%20Fish%20NC%2038/Monitoring/2022/Dive%20surveys/NE%20Commissioned%20report%20(NECR)_Plymouth%20Fish%20Surveys%202022.docx?d=w7bc23b8be413477fbdcf9ac93a899f85&csf=1&web=1&e=jocWj5)

## Appendix 4: Surveys

Doggett, M. and Northen, K.O. (2024). Fal, Helford and St Austell Bay maerl habitat surveys 2023. [NECRXXX]. Natural England. Unpublished, but will be made available for the July 2024 survey.

Franco, A., Barnard, S. and Smyth, K. (2020). An assessment of the viability of fish monitoring techniques for use in a pilot approach in SW England. NECR 270

Jenkin, A., Street, K., Matthews, R., Trundle, C. and Naylor H. (2016). Verifying acoustic signals for habitat classification within St. Austell Bay, Veryan Bay and Gerrans Bay. Annex 9. Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Cornwall IFCA), Hayle. Available at: <https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/17099/sitedata/Research_Reports/StAustellGerransVeryanDDVSSS2016-ANNEX-9.pdf>

Jenkin, A., Trundle, C., Sturgeon, S., Daniels, C. and Street, K. (2023). Fal and Helford Drop Down Video Maerl Habitat Survey Report. Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Cornwall IFCA), Hayle (Accessed 07/06/2023 <https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/17099/sitedata/Research_Reports/22F-H-DDV-Maerl-SurveyFINAL.pdf>)

Katara, I., Peden, W. J., Bannister, H., Ribeiro, J., Fronkova, L., Scougal, C., Martinez., R., Downie, A. L. and Sweeting, C. J. 2021. Conservation hotspots for fish habitats: A case study from English and Welsh waters. *Regional Studies in Marine Science*, *44*, p.101745.

Turnbull, L, Benson, A, Sotheran, I, and Aldis, C. 2024 Maerl Mapping Survey St Austell Bay, Report for Natural England. Envision, Report No. 20240328. In prep. Will be available for survey in July 2024.

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

