**Request for Tender: Platform Development**

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| **Contract Title** | Platform Development |
| **Organisation** | National Trust |
| **Value** | Tenders up to £40,000 (inc VAT) |
| **Closing date** | 5pm, Friday 24th October |
| **Submissions or clarifications to** | anne.mackinnon@nationaltrust.org.uk |
| **Contract start date** | ASAP |

**Background**

Nature Towns and Cities is a coalition of organisations (National Trust, Natural England, and National Lottery Heritage Fund) working together to inspire, incentivise, and support UK towns and cities to take ambitious action for urban green space. Our aim is to help millions more people enjoy time in nature close to home, in greener, thriving towns and cities. We want more urban areas to use nature recovery and nature-based solutions to tackle health inequalities and climate change, and to put nature at the heart of communities to grow their prosperity, connection and resilience.

This commission sits within the Nature Finance Workstream of Nature Towns & Cities. The partners are collaborating on a new initiative to support UK towns and cities to access private funding and stimulate an urban greening marketplace. This will begin by providing an online ‘marketplace’ where urban greening interventions, such as street tree planting, can be tokenised and purchased/funded.

**Scope of the work**

In order to help Local Authorities and their partners access private funding**,** Nature Towns and Cities is looking to develop an online ‘marketplace’ platform to enable funders to purchase / fund urban interventions in the form of tokens, starting with urban tree tokens. Previous work commissioned by Nature Towns and Cities and delivered by Finance Earth has broadly validated the demand side requirements for tree tokens and produced a strawman outline of what functionalities may be needed on a platform, for example a map to display tokens at a street, town and national level. Please note that we envisage part 1 and 2 of this commission be developed in tandem, rather than sequentially.

Part 1:

Further demand side testing is required, and we would like this to be supported by a theoretical display (prototype) of the marketplace platform to help communicate the concept. This prototype should at a minimum display theoretical tokens, provide the ability to click on a token and see more information such as price, nature-related benefits and photos, the ability to bundle tokens and ‘check-out’. Please note this commission is to produce the prototype, demand side testing will be conducted separately.

Part 2:

The second part of this commission (to be developed in tandem with the prototype) is to produce a functional minimum viable platform / marketplace hub from an existing platform hosted by the supplier. This will likely involve developing back-end functions for Local Authorities to upload tree pipeline or token data (this may be coordinates, GIS or other forms of data), the supplier should have capability to work with Local Authorities or a mapping developer to understand the form token data will come in and translate this to a ‘front-end’ map of point / coordinate data and token prices, and to produce a ‘user experience map’. Local Authorities will also require the ability to translate tree pipeline data into a single token point representing multiple trees, and to automatically price tokens according to how many trees/species/size of tree and type of landscape are represented within a token. This may include integrating economic logic from a spreadsheet Nature Towns and Cities holds, which allows Local Authorities to manually input tree data (e.g. coordinates, species type, size etc) and calculate cost of planting, revenue/cash-flows and token cost, to enable automatic calculations upon data submission. We will discuss with the supplier the feasibility of this element and will be looking to work with the supplier to understand if a mapping-specific commission will be necessary.

Another key element of MVP development will be the ability to handle and distribute funds. There is therefore the preference for a platform provider to have an existing payment mechanism, with the ability to hold and distribute funds - with excellent security and the ability to conduct fraud checks - or the ability to integrate a payment mechanism. If the supplier currently holds a funding/wallet mechanism, please state % fees for transactions and any ongoing costs for platform function/maintenance/management. If a payment mechanism would be integrated as part of the commission, please state an estimate of costs, requirements and timelines.

The MVP platform should also include development of a registry. This should link token data to the registry with capacity to automatically update once a token has been purchased, to display on the map that the token is no longer available for purchase.

A final element of the MVP platform (can be discussed) may be a form for Local Authorities to submit applications to a pilot, allowing Nature Towns and Cities to assess applications. It should include a page to host information on the tree token concept and governance documentation and a page/dashboard to submit project reports and display progress/impact.

Please note that a small project team will work with the supplier to map and define functionality and additional functionality may be required based on learnings throughout the commission. These will be discussed with the supplier and areas for development prioritised to adhere to cost.

Depending on the outcome of this work we may wish for the successful supplier to be involved in specifying or delivering the next phase of work (a pilot of the marketplace expected to be delivered over ~21-25 months). We will discuss requirements and resourcing with the supplier at the appropriate time. The supplier must therefore demonstrate in application the capability and capacity to be involved in long-term provision of services, and what these services would likely involve (over ~25 months).

**Key Deliverables**

1. A prototype token marketplace platform mock-up to enable buyer testing. This should aim to be produced no later than December 31st 2025.
2. A functional minimal viable platform with the capability to upload, display and purchase tree tokens. This should aim to be completed by March 31st 2026.

**Expertise of Contractor**

**Necessary:** The proposed team should have experience and expertise in web development, data and mapping, and graphic design.

**Preferred:** It is also advantageous if the contractor has the ability to process and distribute funds. Capacity to be involved in long-term provision of services (~25 months).

**Timeline**

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| Submit responses to: | anne.mackinnon@nationaltrust.org.uk |
| Deadline for submission: | 24th October 2025 |
| Inception Meeting: | W/C 10th November 2025 |
| **Other Key Dates**  |  |
| Draft prototype  | 5th December 2025 |
| Final prototype  | 9th January 2026 |
| Draft MVP platform | 16th February 2026 |
| Final MVP platform | 31st March 2026 |

**Project and Contract Management**

To ensure the project runs smoothly, we would expect a contractor to nominate a Project Manager or lead contact for the commission. We would expect to be in regular contact with the project lead, joining regular progress meetings. We would also expect to give feedback and be consulted on the outputs before final versions are accepted.

The contract will be managed by the National Trust on behalf of the Nature Towns and Cities partnership. The project will be appointed project lead within the Nature Towns and Cities partnership team to ensure direction and outputs are acceptable.

Should this be required, there will also be the opportunity to engage with a small steering group of stakeholders within the Nature Towns and Cities programme team for input and feedback.

We will also support the contractor with engaging a group of Local Authority stakeholders who we hold relationships with.

**Evaluation Criteria**

Submissions will be scored according to the following criteria:

* Understanding of the brief – 15%
* Proposed methodology – 20%
* Experience and confidence in ability to deliver – 20%
* Resourcing and expected timeline to deliver – 25%
* Quotation price / value for money – 20%

**Information to be returned**

Submissions should include the following information:

* Outline of your proposed approach to the project, including details of methodology, proposed outputs, timeline and high level risk log.
* Description of your relevant experience and abridged CVs of the proposed project team, including examples of at least two similar pieces of work you have carried out.
* Proposed budget breakdown, including any ongoing costs and fees associated with platform hosting, management and handling of funds.
* Capability and capacity to be involved in long-term provision of services and outline of what these services would involve (~25 months).
* Details of any matters or concerns not covered by this brief.

Submissions should be no more than 8 pages in length. Abridged VCs can be included as appendices.

These should be returned to anne.mackinnon@nationaltrust.org.uk by the deadline of **5pm, Friday 24th October 2025.**

**Award**

Once evaluation of submissions is complete, all suppliers will be notified of the outcome by email.

**Payment**

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

All invoices should be sent electronically to the address provided on the Purchase Order, and quoting a valid Purchase Order number.

It is anticipated that this contract will end no later than 30/04/2026. 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.

**Insurance**

Please note the National Trust requires contractors to hold a minimum of £2million in Public Liability insurance and £1million in Professional Indemnity insurance. The latter should be maintained in force for the period of the contract plus an additional five years. We will seek evidence of this at an inception meeting or upon signing contracts.