Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Appendix 2 – Call-Off Procedure:

for The Research, Development and Evidence Framework 1

Tender Reference:

C29896 - tNCEA - Wetland Conceptual Model and Monitoring Strategy for the Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTE) Network

Date: 11/08/2025

1.0 Request for Proposal

1.1 The following document is to be used as a Call-Off template to be sent to all Contractors on a sub-lot by the Project Manager of the Contracting Authority for completion and return in accordance with the Call-Off procedures detailed in the Form of Agreement.

Research, Development and Evidence Framework REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL				
To be completed by Contracting Authority Project Manager please remove all red text before issuing				
Project Title	**tNCEA - Wetland Conceptualisation and monitoring Strategy for the Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTE) Network**			
Call off Reference	**RDE840**			
Atamis Contract Reference	**C29896**			
Cost Centre Code (for admin purposes only)	**10004115**			
Date	**11/08/2025**			
Contracting Authority (Defra and its arms-length bodies etc)	**Environment Agency (EA)**			
Project Manager	[redacted]	**Phone number**	[redacted]	
Authorized by		**Email**		
Commercial Contact	[redacted]			
Project Start Date	**18/08/2025**			
Project Completion Date	**20/03/2026**			
For any projects over the direct award threshold, full competition is required (i.e. all contractors on the Sub-Lot are invited to quote)	**Direct Award**	No	**Mini-comp**	**Yes**
Call-Off from Sub-Lot Number	**5.2 R&D for water quality, water resources and coastal erosion risk management**			
Proposal Return Date	**28/07/2025 @ 12:00 noon**			

Evaluation Criteria: Failure to meet any minimum score threshold (**50%**) stated will result in the bid being removed from the process with no further evaluation regardless of other quality or price scores.

Quality	**Weighting**	**70%**
Price	**Weighting**	**30%**
Quality Sub-Criteria Weightings: (Indicative only)		
A01 - Approach & Methodology	This project involves developing a conceptual site model (CSM), proposals for groundwater quality sampling locations and the production of a conceptual model report at a number of Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs). In cases where the site is particularly large, a decision will be made between the contractor and the agency on how to rationalize, prioritise and progress the CSM and maintain high data quality. The contractor is required to outline the approach for both the conceptual site model and proposed dipwell locations in line with EA specifications, covering: · desk study; · conceptual site model; · site walkover and water feature survey (where required); · monitoring locations (map and shapefile) · report Your response must not exceed **3 sides** of A4, Arial font size 12. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online. Please upload a document with the filename: 'A01_Your Company Name'	**50%**
A02 - Proposed Staff (inc Pen Portraits) and Contractor's experience/accreditations	Details of the proposed project team used to deliver this project, including any sub-contractors and/or associates. CVs of all staff and a table of corresponding personnel days expected to be spent on each project task. This table should match the staff's days in the cost proposal (B02). **Please do not include costing in your response** Your response must not exceed **1 side** of A4, Arial font size 12 plus CVs. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online, etc. Please upload a document with the filename: 'A02_Your Company Name'	**20%**
A03 - Project Management (including project plan)	Proposed project management and governance arrangements including day-to-day working for the project, the proposed timetable for the project, risk log and mitigation actions and a Gantt chart	**20%**

	presenting milestones, deliverables, timelines and inter-dependencies. Your response must not exceed **1 side** of A4, Arial font size 12 plus Gantt chart. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online. Please upload a document with the filename: 'A03_Your Company Name'	
A04 - Sustainability	The Authority has set itself challenging commitments and targets to improve the environmental economic and social impacts of its estate management, operation, and procurement. These support the Government's green commitments. The policies are included in the Authority's sustainable procurement policy statement published at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-s-sustainable-procurement-policy-statement Within this context, please briefly explain your approach to delivering the services and how you intend to reduce negative sustainability impacts. Please discuss the methods that you will employ to demonstrate and monitor the effectiveness of your organization's approach for this requirement. Your response must not exceed **1 side** of A4, Arial font size 12. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online. Please upload a document with the filename: 'A04_Your Company Name'	**10%**

Specification
1. Description of work required – overall purpose & scope (including reporting requirements)
Background The Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) is a science innovation and transformation programme led by DEFRA that spans across land and water environments. It has been set up to collect data on the extent, condition and change over time of England's ecosystems and natural capital, and the benefits to society. The NCEA has identified the need for a national surveillance programme for groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE) that is supported by an appropriate sampling design and enables a robust assessment of England's environment using a natural capital

approach.

Aim

This project will support the implementation of the NCEA Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTEs) network. The aim of this project is to undertake a Conceptual Site report at GWDTE sites with the purpose of proposing a monitoring strategy in line with NCEA monitoring design and density principles.

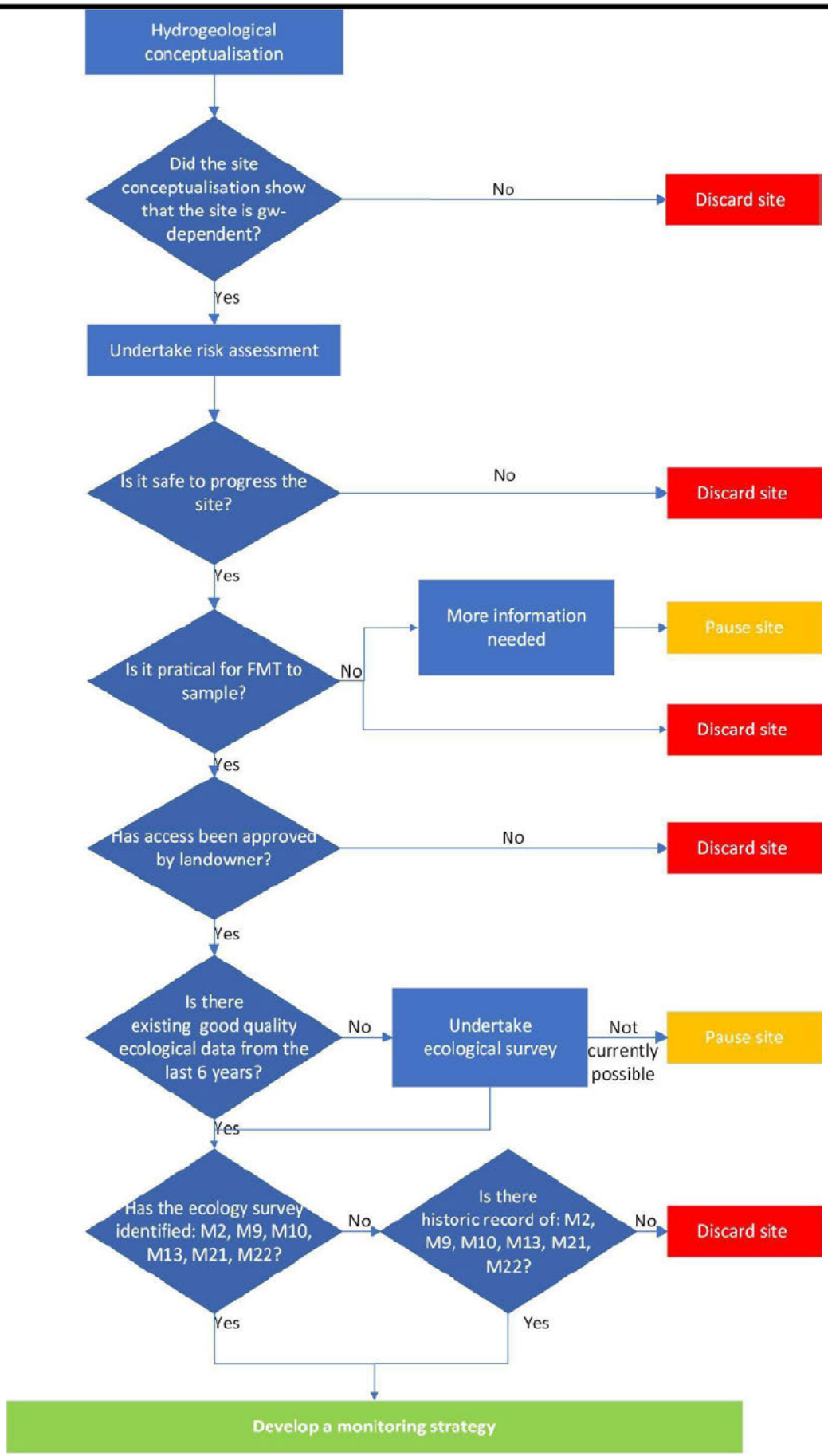
Context

The design of the monitoring strategy should specify the location and number of dip-wells required to capture variations in the groundwater quality and quantity and, to a slightly lesser extent, the vegetation.

The purpose of this document is to establish clear criteria for the acceptance or rejection of GWDTE sites, and to outline the key factors that determine the number and placement of dip-wells at these sites. These principles are developed to enhance the preliminary monitoring strategy for GWDTEs under the NCEA network, which aims to provide a national baseline for groundwater quality and quantity at groundwater-dependent wetlands and assess groundwater influence on key mire communities (M2, M9, M10, M13, M21, M22).

GWDTE Site Acceptance

The decision-making process for GWDTE site selection is guided by a structured flowchart designed to ensure all relevant criteria are considered. This approach maintains consistency and helps in the systematic evaluation of each site.



Conceptual Model

The contractor is required to carry out a desk-based hydro-ecological conceptual model (outlined in the tasks section, and following templates provided by EA) at the following Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), focussing on groundwater dependence, and utilising

historic and locally EA commissioned ecological survey of NVC communities:

Ecological surveys have been focussed on target groundwater dependent NVC types, focussing on the following mire communities. Recently commissioned ecology surveys will be provided by the EA:

· M2 Sphagnum cuspidatum/recurvum bog pool community
· M9 Carex rostrata - Calliergon cuspidatum/giganteum mire
· M10 Carex dioica – Pinguicula vulgaris mire
· M13 Schoenus nigricans - Juncus subnodulosus mire
· M21 Narthecium ossifragum - Sphagnum papillosum valley mire
· M22 Juncus subnodulosus – Cirsium palustre fen-meadow

Where necessary, the contractor should conduct a site walkover and water feature survey where ground-truthing is required.

Number of Dip-wells

Monitoring strategies will vary based on site-specific factors, including the area of groundwater dependent wetland and the distribution of groundwater-dependent vegetation. The number of dip-wells required depends on the size and complexity of the GWDTE. To address site variability, we introduce the concept of a distinct **monitoring unit**, characterized by specific hydrogeological, geographical, or other factors influencing the characteristic of groundwater or habitat. Each monitoring unit requires a minimum of three monitoring points to determine groundwater flow direction and validate measurements.

Groundwater dependent area	Number of monitoring units			
	1	2	3	>3
Area < 1 ha (tiny)	3	Consult with designer	Consult with designer	Consult with designer
1 ha ≤ Area < 10 ha (small)	5	Up to 10	Consult with designer	Consult with designer
10 ha ≤ Area < 50 ha (medium)	9	Up to 12	Up to 15	Consult with designer
Area ≥ 50 ha	12	Up to 15	Up to 18	Consult with designer

Location of Dip-wells

The location of dip-wells will vary according to specific on-site characteristics. Key elements to consider for placing dip-wells to monitor groundwater conditions include:

- Be as close as possible to the vegetation of interest, while carefully minimizing any disturbance to the plants.
- Position both upgradient, where groundwater enters the unit, and downgradient where it exits, to monitor inflow and outflow and capture variability in groundwater conditions.
- Incorporate existing monitoring infrastructure as much as practicably possible where it is of a suitable standard.
- Position monitoring points in locations suitable for regular data collection by the Field Monitoring Team, ensuring ease of access and efficiency and conducting a suitable risk assessment for boggy or unstable ground.
- Place monitoring points in locations considered of low risk of damage, vandalism, or loss, with mitigation measures such as fencing, clear markers, and distance from paths.

Additional Considerations

Groundwater chemistry samples can be obtained from dip-wells and springs. Provided the total number of monitoring points aligns with the guidelines, it is acceptable to use springs as sample points. However, seepages should be excluded as potential monitoring locations due to operational infeasibility.

It is essential to log and reference sites rejected from the network, outlining the reasons for rejection. This practice helps justify included sites, provides valuable data for future reference, and aids in maintaining consistency.

Dip-well locations must be accessible and safe for National Field Monitoring teams to sample, and therefore practicalities and logistics of routes, land access, distances from vehicles and parking locations, remoteness, ground conditions and weight of bottles on a sampling run should be considered.

It may also be beneficial to have backup dip-well locations, especially in areas where shallow bedrock or other concerns might impede the ability to make a suitable depth bore with a hand auger.

Sites

The following SSSI wetlands are to be conceptualised and monitoring strategy's proposed:

Phase 1:

LNA: Empingham Marshy Meadows
LNA: Shacklewell Hollow
KSL: Lympne Escarpment
WSX: Arne
WSX: Corfe Common
YOR: Ox Close
NEA: Upper Teesdale
NEA: Hulam Fen
NEA: Moorhouse & Crosfell

Phase 2 – Potential sites TBC:
WSX: Canford Heath
YOR: Fulford Ings
YOR: Hoddy Cows Spring

Tasks

TASK 1 – Initial Conceptual Site Model (CSM) and water features survey where required to ground truth CSM.

Deliverable 1 – Conceptual Site Model (CSM): Figure, illustrating:
-site setting
-topography
-soils and geology
-groundwater levels
-hydrology
-habitats and NVC vegetation
-review of NVC survey against CSM

TASK 2 – Developing a monitoring strategy consisting of dipwells and stageboards where required, and providing a clear rationale for the location (e.g. ease of access, identified mire community, etc)

Deliverable 2- Proposal of monitoring locations: Map and shapefile, illustrating:
-NGRs of dipwell and stageboard locations
-walking/driving routes
-land parcels with/without permission
-parking

TASK 3 – Site Conceptualisation Report to be completed describing the site assessments conducted at the selected GWDTE sites. There should be one report per wetland. The report would include findings from the ecological survey and any hydrogeological-hydrological site visits, providing the detailed Deliverable 1, conceptual site model.

Deliverable 3 – The report will follow the structure of the 'EA GWDTE Site Conceptualisation Report Template'.

2. Required skills / experience from the contractor and staff. Include any essential qualifications or accreditations required to undertake the work.

The essential skills for delivering this project would be:

- Hydrology and Hydrogeology Knowledge: A deep understanding of groundwater dependent ecosystems and their hydrological functioning is crucial.
- Monitoring Skills: The contractor should have experience with different options for monitoring groundwater level and chemistry (e.g., dipwells, piezometers, boreholes), and be able to recommend preferred options and locations.

3. Proposed program of work and payment table (Detailing specific tasks, key milestones, deliverables & completion date where appropriate)

Task	Task and deliverable	Completion	Payment

no.		Date	Schedule
1	**Conceptual Site Model at X wetlands**	**01/10/2025**	**30%**
2	**Proposal of monitoring locations at X wetlands**	**01/11/2025**	**30%**
3	**Site Conceptualisation Report at X wetlands**	**20/03/2026**	**40%**

4. Risk

Note: *This section is to be used to detail any risks or key elements relevant to the project i.e. Programme deliverable dates, workshops or external requirements, data, consultees, stakeholders etc that could impact the success of the project if they are not managed.*

Project risks and mitigation

The project has a tight schedule and will require the close co-ordination between contractor and EA to provide NVC survey data, which is being delivered by a different contract, and is subject to gaining landowner permissions

- Risk: tight schedule that may slip.
- Mitigation: Regular monitoring of progress through brief, weekly meetings between the EA and contractor PMs with specific agenda item to identify potential or actual task slippage and to put in place mitigating actions at an early stage.

- Risk: inability to access sites for investigation/NVC survey data in a timely manner.
- Mitigation: Identify specific member of EA staff with responsibility for enabling / facilitating access to each site as early as possible
- Utilise historic NVC data where available

- Risk: site owner permission for hydrogeological walkover
- Mitigation: Identify specific member of EA staff with responsibility for enabling / facilitating access to each site as early as possible

- Risk: Due to site access constraints, there is a risk of scheduling overlap or backlog, potentially requiring the contractor to complete multiple sites concurrently, which may impact efficiency and quality.
- Mitigation: Coordinate phased site access and adjust resources as needed to manage potential overlaps and maintain project efficiency

2.0 Proposal

2.1 The following document is to be used as a Call-Off template to be sent to all Contractors on a sub-lot for completion and return in accordance with the Call-Off procedures detailed in the Form of Agreement.

Research, Development and Evidence Framework 2

PROPOSAL

To be completed by the Contractor

Contractor's Name:

Call off Reference:

Sub-Lot Number:

Date:

Note: Your proposal must not exceed 6 sides of A4 plus the Costs Proposal in Section 4 (unless otherwise indicated in project client's specification above). Attachments must not be included unless requested except for a programme diagram and full cost schedule if you considered these would support your proposal.

Do not make or append Caveats and Assumptions in your proposal – any points of uncertainty must be raised as a clarification point prior to submitting the proposal. Where assumptions are to be made, these will be stated by the Authority's Project Manager.

1. Approach & Methodology

Response attached separately.

2. Project Management (inc Project plan). A project plan may be provided as an attachment with your reply (delete if not required)

Response attached separately.

3. Proposed Staff who will do the work and briefly state previous relevant qualification/experience. Contractors experience of undertaking similar projects and accreditations (if requested).

Response attached separately.

4. Risk

Note: *This section is to be used to detail any risks relevant to the project i.e. Programme deliverable dates, data, consultees etc.*

N/A

5. Health & Safety (only complete if requested in defined evaluation criteria)

N/A

6. Sustainability (only complete if requested in defined evaluation criteria)

Response attached separately.

7. Cost Proposal

Please use day rates, including any applicable discounts, as agreed under the framework contract. A full cost schedule may be attached to support the costs summarised below.

Task No.	Name	Framework grade	Day rate	No. of Days or part thereof	Cost

[redacted]

Total Overall Pricing	**£99,074.60**

Phase 2:

[redacted]

Total Overall Pricing	**£39,949.82**

	Total Staff Costs	**£99,074.60**
Expenses (please detail type i.e. travel, accommodation etc.)	**See breakdown of cost above**	
	Overall Costs (including Phase 2)	**£139,024.42**

By signing this form *(Insert Contractors Name)* agree to provide the services stated above for the cost set out in your Cost Proposal and in accordance with the Research, Development & Evidence Framework 1Conditions of Contract.

Contractor Project Manager:	Completed via Atamis
Signature:	Completed via Atamis
Date:	Completed via Atamis

3.0 Order Form

3.1 The following document is to be completed by the Contracting Authority and sent to the Contractor for counter signature to form a Call-Off contract.

Research, Development and Evidence Framework 2 **ORDER FORM**
To be completed by Contracting Authority Project Manager and sent to Contractor for countersignature. PLEASE INCLUDE ENTIRE DOCUMENT
Project title: tNCEA - Wetland Conceptual Model and Monitoring Strategy for the Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTE) Network **Call off Reference: RDE840** **Atamis project ref (if applicable): C29896** **Date: 11th August 2025**

THE Contracting Authority: **Environmental Agency**

THE CONTRACTOR: **AECOM Limited**

APPLICABLE FRAMEWORK CONTRACT

This Order Form is for the provision of the Call-Off Deliverables and dated **11th August 2025**. It's issued under the Research Development & Evidence Framework Agreement reference 30210 for the provision of **tNCEA - Wetland Conceptual Model and Monitoring Strategy for the Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTE) Network**.

CALL-OFF SUB-LOT: **5.2 - R&D for water quality, water resources and coastal erosion risk management**

CALL-OFF INCORPORATED TERMS The following documents are incorporated into this Call-Off Contract. Where numbers are missing we are not using those schedules. If the documents conflict, the following order of precedence applies:

1. Defra Framework Terms and Conditions;
2. Request for Proposal;
3. Proposal;

No other Supplier terms are part of the Call-Off Contract. That includes any terms written on the back of, added to this Order Form, or presented at the time of delivery.

CALL-OFF CONTRACT START DATE: **14th August 2025**

CALL-OFF CONTRACT EXPIRY DATE: **31st March 2026**

CALL-OFF PERIOD: **7.5 Months**

Supplier_Signature

Full Name: [redacted]

Job Title/Role: [redacted]

Date Signed: 11th August 2025

Authority_Signature

Full Name: [redacted]

Job Title/Role: [redacted]

Date Signed: 11/08/2025