Clarifications to Bidder’s Questions:

Landscape Character Assessment guidance update Phase 2 - stakeholder engagement and material preparation

**Q: Please can I ask if Natural England have a budget in mind for Phase 2?**

A: We have been able to alter the upper and lower limit of the Contracts Finder notice to give a range of between £30-40K excluding VAT for Phase 2. We would emphasise that work will need to be targeted given the timescale available and the budget range. In addition, we would encourage bidders to ask for any further information they feel they need to submit an accurate bid.

PLEASE NOTE: Tenders should be submitted **including VAT** as requested in the RFQ.

**Q: Would it be possible to request an extension to the deadline of the tender response for 22nd September?**

**A:** Yes, we can grant the request and have extended the deadline to **midday on the 29th September**.

**Q: Can you explain your approach to Consortia (para 6.2) – what skills in addition to landscape are you expecting to see in a Consortia?**

**A**: We would envisage any tender bid to include a core of landscape professionals at varying grades of seniority who are actively engaged in the authoring and application of Landscape Character Assessments. In addition, to reflect the aim to widen the use of LCA, any tender which is able to demonstrate that the project team brings multi-disciplinary skills and experience will be at an advantage. This might be from within an organisation, or via a consortium. In either instance, we suggest considering including those who might apply LCAs to their work, but are not landscape professionals, for example, in relation to climate change, nature recovery, planning and land management.

We would like to emphasise, that while we are encouraging tenders from consortia, we are aware of the challenges in setting up this type of arrangement.

**Q: Can you clarify the requirement to include paid input from individuals/consultancies. Would you wish us to allow a fixed sum in our current budget or assume that this will be a NE cost. Our preference would be the latter as we will not know day rates or expected time inputs at this stage. If the former it would be helpful to have an indication of a provisional sum to include (e.g 5k)?**

**A:** To simplify the inclusion of the sum for paid input from individuals/consultancies in the tender, please include £5K as a provisional sum, in addition to the rest of your proposed fees for the project.The Commercial Response template includes a line for this.

**Q: What assistance and support NE will be able to provide in identifying, managing and engaging stakeholders?**

A: We as the Natural England client would expect to work closely with the supplier to identify and manage stakeholders. Suppliers should set out how this would be managed and stakeholders engaged in the stakeholder engagement plan, and this should reflect the time and budget available. As mentioned in Task 2, appropriate data protection measures will need to be set up and the approach to these should be included in the RFQ. We would require from the suppliers the content, ideas and presentation of research material etc to support the stakeholder engagement as set out in the RFQ.

**Q: Does NE envisage a steering or advisory group that might extend beyond NE client?**

A: Yes, the project advisory/steering group is envisaged as a mixed group including Natural England project managers and individuals outside of Natural England. We (Natural England client) would expect to play a proactive role in identifying and managing the group, with support from the successful supplier. Note that allowance for two meetings with this group is listed as part of the meetings and project communication under point 4 of paragraph 5.4 of the RFQ.