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**Request for Quotation**

# Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA Maerl Mapping Project: Technical analysis and reporting of acoustic and drop-down video survey data obtained from maerl habitat

**04/09/2023**

**Request for Quotation**

# Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA Maerl Mapping Project: Technical analysis and reporting of acoustic and drop-down video survey data obtained from maerl habitat

# 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:[**Esther.Hughes@naturalengland.org.uk**](mailto:Esther.Hughes@naturalengland.org.uk) **and** [**Angela.Gall@naturalengland.org.uk**](mailto:Angela.Gall@naturalengland.org.uk)

Date: **04/0/2023**

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**

Esther Hughes and Angela Gall will be your contacts 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 | **17/08/23** at **15:00 BST** |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | **31/08/23** at 15:00 **BST** |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | **04/09/23** at **17:00 BST** |
| Intended date of Contract Award | **06/09/23** |
| Intended Contract Start Date | **07/09/23** |
| Natural England to supply dive survey data to contractor (from 2023 survey) | **15/10/2023** |
| Draft final report and data products to be provided to Natural England | **26/01/2024** |
| Final report, maps and outputs to be delivered | **16/02/2024** |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration | **16/02/2024** |

**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):

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|  |  |
| “Authority” | means **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 condensed terms and conditions provided as part of the RFQ will be included in 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**

## 1. Introduction

The Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA was designated on 31 October 2017 and contributes to the UK’s suite of Natura 2000 sites and overall MPA network. The Annex I ‘Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time’ is one of seven supporting habitat features for which the site was designated.

|  |
| --- |
| The SPA was designated (under the EC Habitats Directive) for the following Annex I species |
| Black-throated diver, *Gavia arctica* - A002, nb |
| Great northern diver, *Gavia immer* - A003, nb |
| Slavonian grebe, *Podiceps auritus* - A007, nb |

There are at least 14 potential supporting habitats which support the bird features of the SPA. This includes subtidal sediments which maerl biotopes form part of. The conservation advice recommends the following: ‘Maintain the extent, distribution and availability of suitable habitat (either within or outside the site boundary) which supports the feature for all necessary stages of the non-breeding/wintering period (moulting, roosting, loafing, feeding)’

For full site details please see: [Designated Sites View (naturalengland.org.uk)](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteGeneralDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK9020323&SiteName=falmouth%20bay&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=)

## 1.1 Survey area

The survey area to be prioritised will be St Austell Bay (see Figure 1), revisiting sites from 2016 but also focusing on gap-filling areas of the bay and increasing resolution and confidence of mapping through increased ground-truthing. If there is time and scope, additional sites within the Falmouth to St Austell Bay SPA, such as Veryan Bay, Gerrans Bay and The Bizzies Reef will be surveyed.

Natural England have a planned dive survey of the Fal and Helford SAC, which will include sites within the SPA in addition, however unfortunately the results of this survey are unlikely to be available in time to inform this report.

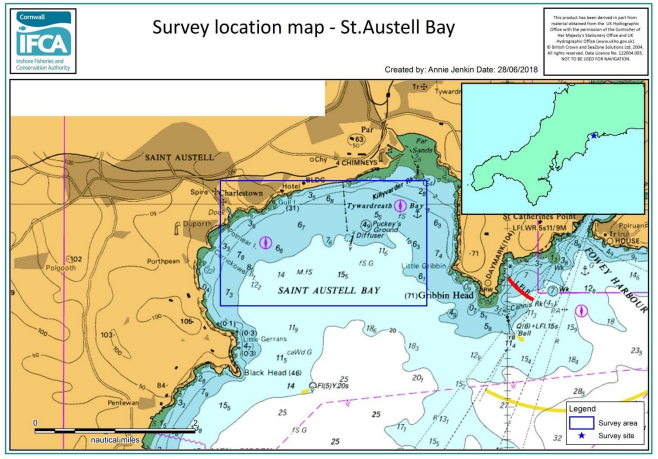


Figure 1. 2016 CIFCA acoustic maerl survey in St Austell Bay (Jenkin et al. 2016d).

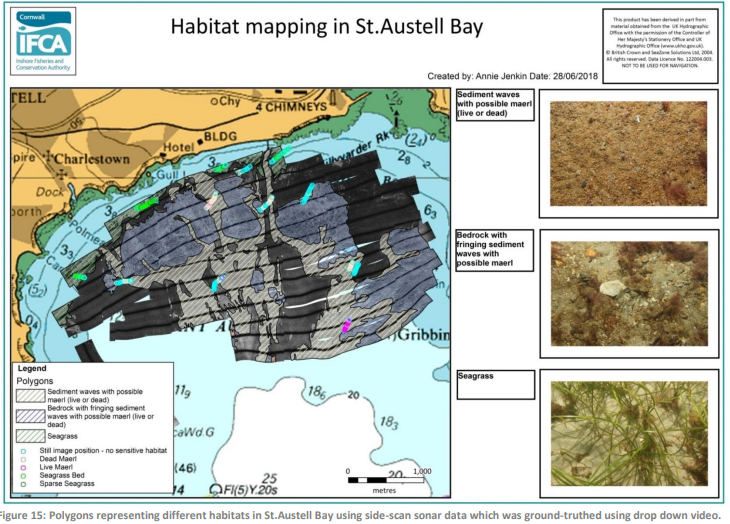


Figure 2. Polygons representing different habitats in St. Austell Bay using side-scan sonar data which was ground-truthed using drop down video (Jenkin et al. 2016d).

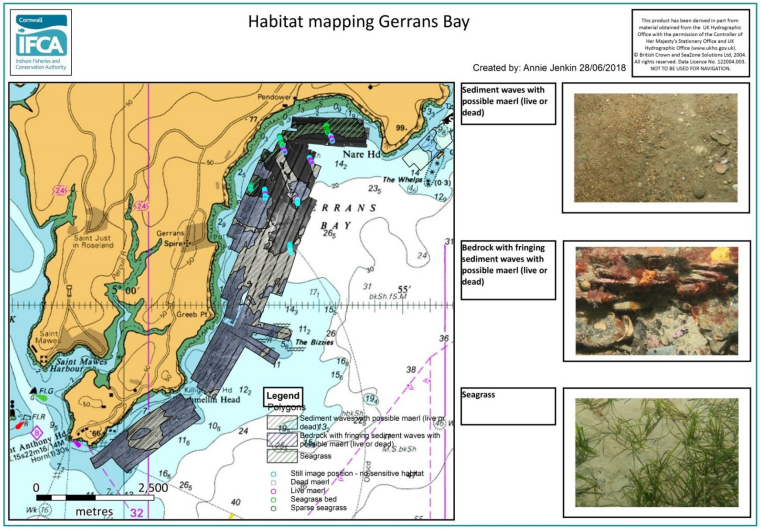


Figure 3. Polygons representing different habitats in Gerrans Bay using side-scan sonar data which was ground-truthed using drop down video (Jenkin et al. 2016d).

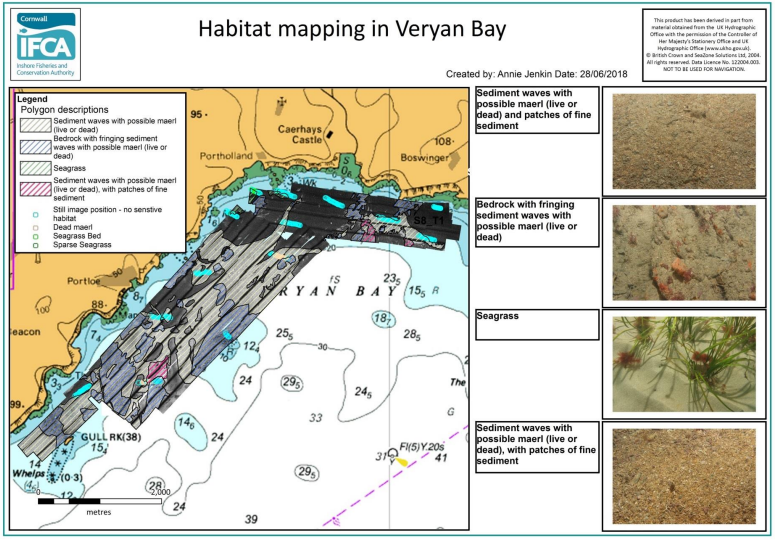


Figure 4. Polygons representing different habitats in Veryan Bay using side-scan sonar data which was ground-truthed using drop down video (Jenkin et al. 2016d).

**1.2 Previous Surveys**

Allen, C., Axelsson, M., Dewey, S. & Wilson, J. (2014). Fal and Helford SAC maerl drop-down video and dive survey 2013. A report to Natural England by Seastar Survey Ltd., 89 pages. <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6285497528745984>

Bunker, F. St P.D. (1992) Survey and monitoring in the Roseland Voluntary Marine Conservation Area. Report to the National Rivers Authority, January 1993

Jenkin, A., Street, K., Matthews, R., Trundle, C. and Naylor H. (2016a). 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., Street, K., Matthews, R., Trundle, C. and Naylor H. (2016b). Verifying acoustic signals for habitat classification within St.Austell Bay, Veryan Bay and Gerrans Bay. Annex 10. Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Cornwall IFCA), Hayle. Available at: <https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/17099/sitedata/Research_Reports/StAustellGerransVeryanDDVSSS2016-ANNEX-10.pdf>

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

Jenkin, A., Trundle, C., Sturgeon, S., Daniels, C., and Street, K. (2023). Fal and Helford Drop Down Video Maerl Habitat Field 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-FieldReport-FINAL.pdf>)

Seasearch (2023). Seasearch Marine Surveys in England. Occurrence dataset <https://doi.org/10.15468/kywx6m> accessed via GBIF.org on 2023-06-14.

There has been more recent work carried by the Cornwall Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (CIFCA) with Exeter University, although the results have not been published yet. We may not be able to share the results, however, we can put the contractors in touch with a contact at Cornwall IFCA once we know who has been awarded the contract so that they are able to find out more information about this survey.

## 2. Aims & Objectives

The Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (CIFCA) are conducting an acoustic and drop-down video (DDV) survey during Summer 2023 to collect high quality data from maerl habitat within the Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA. This data will be used by the contractor to assess the extent, quantification of live versus dead subtidal maerl, and verify the acoustic survey component using drop-video survey methods. The overall objective is to analyse and interpret the data on the distribution, extent and range of subtidal maerl communities to provide evidence for assessing changes within the site and to be able to monitor future changes.

In brief, Natural England are seeking potential contractors to analyse and interpret data obtained and produce a survey report and to import the resulting dataset into Marine Recorder.

## 2.1 Aims

The plan for this tender should achieve the following aims:

* Carry out high quality image analysis using video data obtained from the CIFCA. The acoustic and DDV survey will follow the scheme for DDV analysis ‘Epibiota Remote Monitoring from Digital Imagery: Operational Guidelines’ in the NMBAQC system (Hitchens et al., 2015 for guidance, including the scheme itself).
* Assess the following attributes:
  + Extent of maerl bed communities
  + Distribution of maerl bed communities

It will also provide information to inform:

Species composition of maerl bed benthic fauna (image analysis) and will particularly focus on the percentage cover of live and dead maerl, to be classified using this the maerl categorisation scale (Axelsson, 2023 added in references).

* Compare video and images obtained from DDV to the acoustic data and, if possible, classify the acoustic data and create a habitat map with a discussion of the level of confidence in the mapping.
* To record the percentage cover of dead and live maerl (image analysis) for every photo/still and including across each transect, once this is divided into habitat (this can be done in a spreadsheet). The categorisation paper is in draft format, but should be used for this purpose (Axelsson, 2023).
* To compare data collected in comparison with previous data (including 2016 CIFCA acoustic survey), to produce a report indicating the condition of maerl beds in the Falmouth to St Austell Bay SPA.
* Although maerl is not a feature of the SPA, we would like the contractor to give an indication of the condition of the supporting habitat within the site (please see Fal and Helford SAC condition assessment for information on attributes and targets <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6285497528745984> and the [Fal and Helford SAC Feature Condition](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineFeatureConditionDirect.aspx?SiteCode=UK0013112&SiteName=fal%20and%20helford&SiteNameDisplay=Fal%20and%20Helford%20SAC&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality=).

## 2.2 Objectives

**The specific objective** of this contract is to analyse still images (alongside supporting video) obtained from the DDV survey carried out on the maerl beds as supporting habitats of the Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA. The survey methodology being used for the Summer 2023 survey carried out by CIFCA will be shared with the contractor when the contract is awarded. The number of tows, images and video is dependent on the acoustic work, which is currently being carried out, and therefore only approximations have been made. We are hoping to carry out between 40 and 60 tows, which would contain between 1000 and 1300 images, and up to approximately 1200 minutes of video time.

The attributes to be monitored are;

* Percentage cover of live and dead maerl
* Extent of maerl bed habitat
* Distribution of maerl bed habitat
* Species composition of maerl bed benthic fauna

For details on these attributes please refer to the Conservation Advice package for the [Fal and Helford SAC](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK0013112&SiteName=fal%20and%20helford&SiteNameDisplay=Fal%20and%20Helford%20SAC&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality=&HasCA=1).

Under this specification contractors must:

i. Produce a concise, evidence based technical report detailing the work undertaken.

ii. Complete full analysis of the still images from approximately 40 – 60 video tows (approximately 1000 to1300 images, and up to approximately 1200 minutes of video time) carried out according to NMBAQCS guidelines Epibiota Remote Monitoring from Digital Imagery: Interpretation Guidelines (nmbaqcs.org) with a minimum 10% quality assurance of video and image data. Please also provide a separate quote for analysis per hour of video and number of images.

• Image analysis should specifically include the maerl attributes listed above.

• Split video tows into habitat according to MESH guidelines, as mentioned in the Aims section, focusing on maerl habitats, which the survey will be aiming to target.

• Note boundaries between maerl and non-maerl habitats. Provide a simple description of non-maerl habitats (these are not the focus of the survey and do not require full analysis.).

• Further interpretation of the data that comes out of the image analysis, including classification of the maerl areas following the maerl categorisation scheme, relating results to the acoustic data to produce a habitat map

• Comparison to 2016 data (maerl extent).

• Record non-native species identified in video/images • Provide thoughts on integrity (see point vi below)

• Note any evidence of anthropogenic impacts e.g., trawl scars

iii. Include appropriate analyses to compare the new 2023 data with survey data from 2016 (which can be requested from Natural England or the CIFCA) for Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA.

iv. there should be consideration for any variation across specific geographic areas, notable communities or exposure to environmental or anthropogenic factors.

v. Evaluate limitations of the data collected with recommendations for improvement

vi. In addition, the contractor is not obliged to, but is welcome to provide any overriding thoughts on the integrity of the maerl supporting habitat, which will be considered by site leads to inform potential future management of the site.

vii. 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 (further detailed in General Requirements of the Framework, Section 3 Paragraph 12. Required Standards).

Natural England will review this evidence when carrying out the overall feature(s) condition assessment in accordance with Natural England guidance which takes account of several further considerations.

## 3 Methods

## 3.1 Pre-survey Deskwork

Before the survey is carried out the contractor will discuss any pre-survey work with (Esther Hughes, Natural England), including:

1. Clarification of roles, responsibilities and expectations

2. Review existing information provided by Natural England.

3. Ways of working and close collaboration with NE.

## 3.2 Field Survey

Video survey work will be conducted by the CIFCA during Summer 2023. Should the winning contractor of this RFQ, if not already present on the survey, wish to observe the survey data collection, this may be possible, but this is not considered essential.

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## 3.3 Invasive Non-Native Species

Invasive non-native species (INNS) are considered to be one of the top five pressures directly driving biodiversity loss globally. Prevention is the key focus, particularly in marine environments.

The contractor must collect georeferenced photographs of INNS observed on site, record these on Marine Recorder, report to the Natural England Project Officer, and include within the survey report. Any species currently listed as ‘alert’ species should be flagged immediately to the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat and with the Natural England Project Officer. More information and guidance including ID guides can be found at www.nonnativespecies.org.

## 4 Outputs – Products and Timescales

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by Esther Hughes, Lead Adviser (esther.hughes@naturalengland.org.uk)

**4.1 Data requirements**

Data must be interpreted, analysed and presented in light of the overarching hypotheses stated above. Contractors should pay particular consideration to the data and GIS required formats for information compatibility including MEDIN metadata standards and Marine Recorder provision. All datasets must have associated metadata and meet appropriate organisational metadata standards. Relevant metadata standards are a requirement for data which Natural England publishes externally.

All interpreted products following data analysis should accompany the draft report; these will include:

* All GIS datasets need to be provided in ESRI ArcGIS format compatible with ArcGIS 10.2 and have attached metadata.
* Spreadsheet of results of video and image analysis, as well as the Marine Recorder output, to include additional info that doesn't fit into Marine Recorder.
* Habitat map in ESRI ArcGIS format. All GIS files containing habitat data for each individual survey need to be produced to the MESH translated habitat Data Exchange Format (DEF) to the most detailed EUNIS habitat level possible. MNCR (v15.03) data should be added to the ORIG\_HAB column. The GUI provided by Natural England for each survey will be used, and as much information as possible (e.g., survey name, originally assigned feature/habitat name etc.) from the original dataset, as well as any documentation provided (where available) should be included in the resulting datasets to maintain a useful audit trail. As specified in the MESH DEF, data files must be provided as ESRI Shapefiles or as a feature class data within a geodatabase using the WGS1984 geographic coordinate system and lat/long coordinates. If not included in the GIS data layers listed above all sampling locations, vessels tracks, and links to data obtained should also be included as a single GI layer.
* A MESH data confidence assessment for each habitat map should be calculated and provided in a ‘MESH confidence scoresheet’ \*.XLS file. The confidence assessment process is described, and a template provided in the following MESH resources The MESH Confidence Assessment Scheme.
* Accompanying metadata for the data set must meet the MEDIN metadata discovery standard. Metadata derived as part of this project must be submitted to Natural England in an XML file which Natural England will archive through Data Archive Centres (DACs). Guidance ‘MEDIN Evidence for Contractors’ will be provided to the winning contractor.
* Copies of the original data spreadsheets or databases are to be provided in the appropriate Microsoft Office format
* Stills photographs to be provided in their raw format on CD/DVD or USB compliant external hard drives.

All sample data (e.g., grab sample analyses, video/still photography analyses, PSA analysis and biotope lists, biological taxon data) need to be entered into the latest version of Marine Recorder. NBN data and an exported snapshot file of the data should be provided for QA. Natural England will provide licence keys for Marine Recorder. Natural England will supply a ‘Marine Recorder guidance for contractors’ document to successful contractors.

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. More information and guidance including ID guides can be found at GB non-native species secretariat.

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) 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 and 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.

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 report/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), World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS))

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

The NE Project Officer 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 survey, the first of two staged payments for this contract will be released. Final payment will be issued upon completion of the final report.

## 4.1 Timeline for project delivery

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Event | Date |
| Start-up meeting |  |
| Natural England / CIFCA to supply acoustic, video and still imagery survey data (from 2023) alongside the field report to contractor |  |
| Natural England to supply dive survey data to contractor (from 2023 survey) | 15/10/2023 |
| Draft final report and associated products to be provided by contractor to Natural England |  |
| Final report, maps and output to be delivered |  |

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.

**5 Other**

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](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/)
  + Aerial photography from [Next Perspectives](http://ww5.nextperspectives.co.uk/?subid1=4bd5799e-3c22-11ee-8f26-ac67f8236527)
  + 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](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-access-natural-englands-maps-and-data)

* Additional reports to help with the analysis and report, such as those listed in Section 1.2

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](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/) at the end of the project via [www.data.gov.uk](https://www.data.gov.uk/) and the MEDIN Data Archiving Centres.

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 at the end of the project via data.gov.uk and the MEDIN Data Archiving Centres.

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**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. **Invoicing should occur following submission of the final report, after addressing any comments by NE.**

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 6 months to end no later than 28/02/2024. 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:

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** | **60%** | **Service / Product Proposal** | **Quality of proposal for report content and data analysis** | **Q1.1 (50% of technical score available) What approach will be taken to analyse and report on this data?**  **Q1.2 (30% of technical score available) What image analysis methodology is proposed?** |
| **Key personnel** | **Q2 (10% of technical score available)**  **What experience and training in image analysis and other relevant skills do key personnel have?** |
| **Quality Assurance measures** | **Q3 (10% of technical score available) Will the analysis follow accepted standards as listed in this document?** |
| **Commercial** | **40%** | **Whole life cost of the proposed Contract** | **Commercial Model** | **Q4 (100% of commercial score available)**  **What is the total cost of the project?** |

**Technical (**60**%)**

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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Methodology** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| **Q1.1 What approach will be taken to analyse and report on this data?**  **Q1.2 What image analysis methodology is proposed?**  **Responses to both questions should not exceed four sides of A4 in total, and use Arial font, size 11.** | **Your response should:**  **1) Demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of the requirements.**  **2) Be a clear, practical, achievable, and cost-effective methodology to deliver these requirements.**  **3) Have information in sufficient detail to allow a full appraisal of the suitability of the approach to deliver for the project.**  **4) Include a schedule of works with timelines to show how you will execute these works.** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key personnel** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| **Q2. What experience and training in image analysis and other relevant skills do key personnel have?**  **Response in the form of brief CVs of key personnel** | 1. Key personnel involved in analysis have demonstrable experience and/or training in relevant topics. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quality Assurance** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| **Q3 Will the analysis follow accepted standards as listed in this document?** | 1. NMBAQCS guidelines Epibiota Remote Monitoring from Digital Imagery followed. 2. MESH guidelines to be followed 3. Metadata MEDIN compliant 4. Outputs in the formats listed in this document |

**Commercial (**40**%)**

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

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 objective/key personnel 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 via a Purchase Order.**

**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 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_