**Exploring the potential of Regional Farm and Rural Support Groups to stimulate Green Finance Markets**

**31/07/2023**

**Request for Quotation**

**Exploring the potential of Regional Farm and Rural Support Groups to stimulate Green Finance Markets**

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: **stephen.jones@naturalengland.org.uk**

Date: **30/08/2023**

Time: **12:00 noon**

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**

**Stephen Jones (**[**stephen.jones@naturalengland.org.uk**](mailto:stephen.jones@naturalengland.org.uk)**)** 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 | 31-Jul-2023 at 12:00 BST / GMT |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 18-Aug-2023 at 12:00 BST / GMT |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 30-Aug-2023 at 12:00 BST / GMT |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 6- Sep-2023 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 11 – Sep-2023 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration | 22-March-2024 [6.5 months] |

**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 **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 (available at Procurement at Natural England - Natural England - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) 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, inclusive 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**

**Background**

The UK government recognises Green Finance to be a rapidly emerging opportunity to support the delivery of landscape scale nature recovery. The UK governments is committed to stimulating Green Finance markets, with ambitions to mobilise £500m of private finance by 2027 and £1bn by 2030. The success of green finance requires not only demand and investment from the private sector, but also widespread engagement and adoption from landowners/managers as critical supply actors in markets.

As new markets for ecosystem services develop, it will be necessary for farmers/land managers to collaborate at catchment or landscape levels to attract and engage with investors and to reach the scale of delivery that is required. For buyers, investors and policy makers, aggregating supply addresses the need for scale for both environmental and economic outcomes. For farmers and landowners' aggregation is a key mechanism through which to gain access to private finance and create alternative revenue streams for the delivery of environmental outcomes.

There are numerous models of aggregation emerging (e.g., farmer clusters groups, cooperatives, Landscape Enterprise Networks, river catchment led groups, private sector led groups). Despite the range of models, they all share similar characteristics and are all typically characterised by the identification of trusted third-party intermediaries that specialise in coordinating or aggregating demand and supply actors to enable Green Finance transactions. A Green Finance Institue (2023) report summarises the benefits that aggregation creates for all transactional parties', with key benefits including:

* Greater scale of delivery to make Green Finance transactions environmentally and economically viable for policy makers and investors including the ability to deliver against key targets and recommendations (i.e. our 30x30 commitments and the recommendations of the Lawton report (2010) for protected sites to be ‘Bigger, Better and more joined-up')
* Enabling the private sector to reach the scale required to meet regulatory reporting targets more efficiently.
* Create opportunities for demand actors to share costs where interests in a landscape overlap.
* Providing insurance against non-delivery of intended outcomes I.e., if one famer/land manager fails to deliver the impact can be mitigated by the diffusion across multiple farms.
* Creating opportunities for knowledge sharing through peer-to-peer learning which can increase the confidence of farmers/landowners in encourage participation in ecosystem service markets.
* Creating cost efficiencies for farmers/landowners by reducing the administrative costs for farmers of engaging in Green Finance markets.
* Shared learning and knowledge building through aggregation models that may in turn lead to a greater outcome delivery of agri-environment subsidy schemes, such as ELMs.

Regional Farm and Rural Support Groups (RFRSGs) ([listed here)](https://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Support-Groups-directory-2021-spreads-1.pdf) have emerged as a bottom-up response to farming challenges and represent another key potential aggregator group with the capability to facilitate and reduce the barriers to engagement with Green Finance markets for both demand and supply side actors.

Natural England are particularly interested in understanding the capability and capacity of these regional hubs to support landscape scale environmental transformation. Specifically, the potential role RFRSGs could play in stimulating Green Finance markets and supporting key place-based environmental initiatives such as agri-environment schemes, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and improving the condition of designated protected sites (SSSI).

Elliott, J. (2021). Building local markets for sustainable land management with the Eden Model: A toolkit for practitioners. *Green Alliance.* Retrieved from: [Building\_local\_markets\_for\_sustainable\_land\_management\_with\_the\_Eden\_Model.pdf (green-alliance.org.uk)](https://green-alliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Building_local_markets_for_sustainable_land_management_with_the_Eden_Model.pdf)

Green Finance Institute. (2023). Financing a farming transition: Key Enablers and Recommendations. Retrieved from: <https://www.greenfinanceinstitute.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/GFI-Financing-a-Farming-Transition.pdf>

The Prince’s Countryside Fund. (2021). National Directory of Farm and Rural Support Groups. Retrieved from: [Support-Groups-directory-2021-spreads-1.pdf (princescountrysidefund.org.uk)](https://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Support-Groups-directory-2021-spreads-1.pdf)

**Aim and Objectives**

Natural England are commissioning research to investigate the potential of RFRSGs, specifically through their role as aggregators, to stimulate Green Finance markets and support key place-based environmental planning initiatives such as LNRS.

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Understand the coverage of RFRSGs or similar initiatives across England.
2. Characterise RFRSGs in England (with focus on geographical scale, membership, governance structures, level of engagement with Green Finance and links to local governance arrangements and delivery frameworks) to assess their individual and collective potential to act as a Green Finance aggregators and support place-based environmental planning.
3. Produce a heat-map to visually illustrate the above and identify gaps in national coverage and capacity to engage with Green Finance markets and support place-based environmental planning.
4. Explore and demonstrate the potential of RFRSGs to attract natural capital investment and support its distribution through a series of case studies aimed at exploring RFRSGs state of readiness and capacity to act as aggregators in local emerging ecosystem service markets.
5. Provide a series of recommendations aimed at:
   1. RFRSGs: to facilitate their engagement with emerging Green Finance markets and highlighting best practice to enable other RFRSGs to follow suite
   2. Policy makers: to increase awareness of the potential of RFRSGs to support Green Finance policy and direct finance flows to deliver landscape scale environmental goals
   3. Responsible authorities: to increase awareness of the potential of RFRSGs to support and deliver on integrated place-based environmental planning.

**Methods**

To meet the research objectives the contractor is expected to utilise the following methods:

1. Survey methods to generate data on coverage and characteristics of English RFRSGs and similar initiatives.
2. Appropriate GIS and mapping software to visualise survey data.
3. Semi-structured interviews with a sample of RFRSGs to support the development of case studies.

Contractors should not be limited to these methods and are encouraged to incorporate in their proposal additional/alternative methods that will address the aims and objectives of the research.

**Contractor requirements**

NE are seeking to appoint a contractor to design and undertake primary research which will address the aim and objectives stated above. The successful contractor will be required to:

1. Produce a data set (including, name, location, key contact details) of all RFRSGs and similar groups in England to provide a basis for surveying.
2. Design and conduct the survey with all English RFRSG and similar groups identified, to understand the coverage and characterise English RFRSG’s consistent with the aims and objectives of this research.
3. Use survey data and appropriate GIS mapping software to produce a heat-map to illustrate geographic coverage and key characteristics of UK RFRSGs and similar initiatives.
4. Analyse survey responses to assess the potential for RFRSGs to act as aggregators within ecosystem service markets and support place-based environmental planning.
5. Use survey data to inform the selection of several RFRSGs to be case studies that represent a range of structures and levels of preparedness to act as aggregators within emerging ecosystem service markets.
6. Conduct semi-structured interviews with key actors within the identified case study RFRSGs to further explore key questions around capacity to; act as facilitators, design interventions, attract investment and negotiate transactions.
7. Record, transcribe and analyse qualitative data using appropriate software (i.e. QSR Nvivo).
8. Produce research outputs detailed in the section below.
9. Adhere to NE’s ethical principles and obtain ethical approvals prior to commencing any data collection activities.

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate relevant experience in conducting primary social research and have direct experience of deigning surveys and analysing survey data, GIS and interviews. Experience conducting agricultural research is highly desirable. We are particularly keen to award this research to a contractor with the demonstrable knowledge and track record of conducting Green Finance research.

**Outputs**

The project will be expected to generate the following outputs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverable reference** | **Deliverable detail** |
| D1: A data set of all RFRSGs currently active in England | An up-to-date data set listing the name, location and key contact details of all RFRSGs currently active in England. |
| D2: GIS Heat Map of RFRSG coverage and capacity across England | Provide a descriptive summary of the survey data and produce a heat map (GIS) based on this data to illustrate coverage and key capacity indicators. |
| D3: Case study summaries | A series of engaging case study summaries (i.e. infographics/slides/leaflets) aimed at key user groups (RFRSGs, policy makers and responsible authorities) |
| D4: Final report | Summative report combining both stages of the research, reporting on methodology, findings and implications of the work for policy and practice. |
| D5: Research webinar | Presentation of research findings to a DEFRA, NE and a wider ALB’s audience |

Once let, the following are the key project milestones:

| **Reference** | **Deliverable** | **Responsible Party** | **Date of completion** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MS1 | Project inception meeting/teleconference between contractor and NE staff, agree ways of working | NE staff/Contractor | W/C 11th September 2023 |
| MS2 | Establish NE/DEFRA research steering group | NE staff | W/C 11th September 2023 |
| MS3 | Agree final methodology and project timeline | Contractor | W/C 2nd October |
| MS4 | Produce a data set (name, location, key contact details) of all RFRSGs in England to provide a basis for surveying (D1). | Contractor | W/C 9th October |
| MS5 | Complete survey of all identified RFRSGs | Contractor | W/C 4th December |
| MS6 | Based on survey responses, identify sub-set of RFRSGs for case studies in consultation with NE | NE staff/Contractor | W/C 11th December |
| MS7 | Conduct interviews with sub-set of RFRSGs | Contractor | W/C 29th January |
| MS8 | Complete all data analysis | Contractor | W/C 4th March 2024 |
| MS9 | Submit draft of GIS Heat Map of RFRSG coverage and capacity across England (D2) | Contractor | W/C 4th March 2024 |
| MS10 | Submit draft of case study summaries (D3) | Contractor | W/C 4th March 2024 |
| MS11 | Submit draft of final report (D4) to NE for comment | Contractor | W/C 4th March 2024 |
| MS12 | Presentation of research findings to NE and policy audience (D5) | Contractor | W/C 4th March 2024 |
| MS13 | All final deliverables due (D1, D2, D3, D4, D5) | Contractor | W/C 18th of March 2024 |
| MS15 | Wrap up meeting | NE Staff / Contractor | W/C 18th of March 2024 |

This is the envisaged contract timetable although contractors may need to provide additional timetable detail or adapt this in line with their proposed methodology. Bidders should highlight any proposed deviation from this timeline within their bid. Any delays to this timetable during the contract should be immediately discussed with the Project Officer.

**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 can be submitted at intervals throughout the project on completion of the following project milestones:

Payment of 15% of the total contract value will be made on completion of MS3. A second payment of 15% will be made on completion of MS5. The remainder (70%) of the invoice will be paid on receipt of a detailed invoice following completion (to the satisfaction of the Natural England Nominated Officer) of MS8 detailed above, and formal acceptance of the specified output

**Payment schedule**

| **Milestone/deliverable number** | **Activity/deliverable required for payment** | **Payment percentage** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| MS3 | Agree final methodology and approach to focus groups, including project timeline | 15% |
| MS5 | Complete survey of all identified RFRSGs | 15% |
| MS13 | All final deliverables due | 70% |
| **Total** |  | **100%** |

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 6.5 months to end no later than 31/03/2024**.** 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 – **70**%

Commercial – **30**%

**Evaluation criteria**

Evaluation weightings are **70**% technical and **30**% commercial, the winning tenderer will be the highest scoring combined score.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Award Criteria | Weighting (%) | Evaluation Topic & Weighting | Sub-Criteria | Weighted Question |
| Technical | 70% | Service / Product Proposal | Methodology | **2 Questions**  Q1.1 Provide details of your proposed methodology. (35% of technical score available)  Q1.2 Provide a plan for knowledge exchange and enabling research impact. (10% of technical score available) |
| Key personnel | **1 Question**  Q2 Provide details of the proposed project team and team structure that you intend to use to deliver this project. (30% of technical score available) |
| Quality Assurance measures | **1 Question**  Q3 Provide details on the proposed project delivery plan, including timelines, risk, ethics and handling and storage of third-party data. (15% of technical score available) |
|  |  |  | Management of sustainability and social value | **2 Questions**  Q4.1: Provide details on how the delivery of the project aligns with our Sustainable Procurement Policy Statement.(5% of technical score available)  Q4.2: Provide details on how the delivery of the project aligns Natural England’s commitment to delivering Social Value (5% of technical score available) |
| Commercial | 30% | Whole life cost of the proposed Contract | Commercial Model | **1 Question**  Q5 Include detailed breakdown of costs to deliver the project in the Commercial Response Form.(100% of commercial score available) |

**Technical (70%)**

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.

**Please ensure that your application combines responses to the following questions into one document.** Within the document your response to each question should be clearly separated and labelled. Each question will be evaluated in isolation and scored against the criteria outlined above. Tenderers should provide answers that meet the criteria of each technical question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Methodology** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q1.1 Provide details of your proposed methodology.  **Responses to Q1.1 & 1.2 should not exceed four sides of A4, and use Arial font, size 11.** | Set out in detail each element of the methodology and how this will be carried out. This should include the approach, design and analytical strategy proposed to meet the requirements of this project. Your response should:  ● Demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of the requirements defined in the specification.  ● Be a clear, practical, achievable, and cost-effective methodology to deliver these requirements within the funding time frame.  ● Provide a clear rationale and justification for the chosen approach.  ● Outline any support required from the authority (Natural England).  Evaluation criteria: Your response will be evaluated based on:  ● The inclusion of information in sufficient detail to allow a full appraisal of the suitability of the approach to deliver for the project. ● The appropriateness of the approach to deliver against the  defined evidence needs of Natural England.  ● The extent to which the project is practical, achievable and cost-effective. |
| Q1.2 Provide a plan for knowledge exchange and enabling research impact. | Your response should demonstrate:  ● Awareness of the principles and practices of knowledge exchange. ● How you will enable the impacts you are anticipating.  ● The time allocated to knowledge exchange and impact enabling activities within the proposed project. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key personnel** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q2.1 Provide details of the proposed project team and team structure that you intend to use to deliver this project.  **Responses should not exceed two sides of A4 (excluding CV's), and use Arial font, size 11.** | Provide details of the proposed project team and team structure that you intend to use to deliver this project. The response must demonstrate that the staff members (including any sub-contractors if appropriate) who will be assigned to delivery of this specific project have sufficient technical expertise across the broad range of skills required to deliver the project objectives including both generic skills and specific skills. The response should also include examples of where the proposed consortium has leadership in delivering applied social science research and detail experience of researching farmers/land managers and green finance  The information provided should include:  ● A short CV for each member of the proposed Project team, information on the amount of time input (days/hours) to this specific project, their roles, responsibilities, levels of seniority, the value added that they will bring to the project,their lines of reporting and their availability to do the work. We suggest this information should be provided in a table. The time input should match the staff days included in the cost proposal.  ● The name(s) of the individual(s) who will have overall management responsibility for the project and will report to Natural England’s project officer and the person who will be responsible for ensuring that the Project is completed satisfactorily. Please highlight this information in bold.  Your response will be evaluated based on:  ● The level and relevance of expertise and skills, provided by the Project team and sub-contractors and the value added delivered by this. This will consider expertise and skills in: project management; GIS; quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis.  ● The suitability and adequacy of the staff making the inputs to each stage of the Project (in terms of their expertise and skills), the quantity of their inputs and their availability to do the work.  ● The clarity and sufficiency of lines of reporting. |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quality assurance** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q3.1 Provide details on the proposed project delivery plan, including timelines, risk, ethics and handling and storage of third-party data.  **No page limit for this question, although please ensure responses are concise.** | Provide detailed project management arrangements for the project including day-to-day working for the project, a proposed timeline for the delivery, risk log and mitigation actions. The information provided should include:  ● A Gantt chart presenting milestones, deliverables, timelines and inter-dependencies.  ● Identification of possible risks to the delivery of the proposed project, including risks rating (high, medium, low) and actions to mitigate against identified risks. This should include details of how risks will be tracked and reported to Natural England for the entire project life-course. We suggest this information is presented in a table.  ● There should also be consideration of cover for key roles given any unforeseen circumstances.  ● Information on the ethical approval procedures that will be followed prior to collection of primary data.  ● Detail how data will be handled, transported, shared and stored securely. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Management of sustainability and social value** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q4.1: Provide details on how the delivery of the project aligns with our Sustainable Procurement Policy Statement. | Your response should:  ● Include any relevant sustainability statement from your organisation  ● Demonstrate how you will implement this in the context of this project |
| Q4.2: Provide details on how the delivery of the project aligns Natural England’s commitment to delivering Social Value | Your response should:  ● Include any relevant social value statement from your organisation  ● Demonstrate how you will implement this in the context of this project |

**Commercial (30%)**

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.

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 [30%] (Maximum available marks)

* Technical

Score = (Bidder’s Total Technical Score / Highest Technical Score) x [70%] (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 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_