|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 22nd May 2023 |  |
|  | Andrew Cole  Lutra House, Dodd Way (Off Seedlee Road),  Walton Summit Centre, Bamber Bridge, Preston, PR5 8BX |

**Request for Quotation**

**Botanical surveys of Agri-environment agreements: North England**

**18th May 2023**

**Request for Quotation**

**Botanical surveys of Agri-environment agreements: North England**

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: **andrew.cole@naturalengland.org.uk**

Date: **07/06/2023**

Time: **12 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**

Andrew Cole 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 | 24-May-2023 at 17:00 BST |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 31-May-2023 at 09:00 BST |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 07-Jun-2023at12:00 BST (12 noon) |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 08-Jun-2023 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 12-Jun-2023 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration | 30-Oct-2023 |

**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 supplier terms and conditionsprovided 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, inclusiveof 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 Authoritywith a publication threshold of £12,000inclusive 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 to Natural England**

Natural England is the government’s adviser on the natural environment. Our purpose is to help conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. The twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change mean Natural England’s work is more important now that ever and this, is why our five-year mission is to build partnerships for nature’s recovery.

**Botanical surveys of Agri-environment agreements: North England**

**Background to the specific work area relevant to this purchase**

The Agri-Environment Evidence Programme seeks to monitor and evaluate Agri-environment schemes, including Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship. The Agri-Environment Evidence Programme is delivered by Natural England on behalf of Defra, with input from the staff across Defra, the Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and Historic England. Natural England’s scheme monitoring work focuses on terrestrial habitats, while that carried out by the Environment Agency includes freshwater habitats and resource protection. An important part of the programme’s monitoring is to assess how Agri-environment options change in habitats and plant communities over time.

**Requirement**

The purpose of this work is to conduct botanical surveys of plant communities which have been under Agri-environment management. This work is part of long-term research which is assessing the impact of Agri-environment agreements through repeat surveys over time. The work will help us to assess robustness of findings given the methods used and variation in survey results.

The work has been split into two regional contracts to allow contractors to minimise the required travel by choosing particular regions (North and South). This contract is for North England. Details of the geographic split is given below (Table 1). A key element of the contract is flexibility. This is so that the botanical surveys can be coordinated with ongoing field work as part of a larger research project. This will require the successful contractor to be on site at the same time as other project contractors.

The requirement is for 10 days of field surveys, plus time required for planning, preparation, data management and report writing. Additionally, given the need for the surveys to overlap ongoing field work, responses should include additional resources required to enable flexibility of survey dates. Where feasible, we are keen for the surveys to be conducted earlier in the field season, for example late June and July.

The successful contractor requires strong botanical survey skills and plan ID. We would expect the successful contractor to be FISC level 5 or equivalent. The contractors will need to ID plants in a wide range of habitats.

**Background information: Previous surveys**

The botanical surveys in this contract build on previous research and return to the same locations. This enables Natural England to detect change in plant communities over time and understand the impact of different Agri-environment options.

Specifically, the surveys in summer 2023 are repeat surveys building on previous projects:

Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)

*HLS baseline:* *Monitoring the outcomes of Higher Level Stewardship: Results of a 3-year agreement monitoring programme* (NECR114: Mountford et al 2013).

* A baseline field survey of HLS agreements which were in their first year.
* Surveys were conducted in 2009 to 2011.

*HLS 2nd survey:* *Agreement Scale Monitoring of HLS: Resurvey of agreements baselined between 2009-11* (LM0445: Staley et al 2017).

* Repeat surveys of 174 HLS agreements, first surveyed in the HLS baseline project. The agreements were widely distributed across England to ensure coverage of grassland, moorland and arable options. Additionally, agreements were targeted to include representatives of heath, fen, bog and calcicolous grassland options.
* Resurveys were conducted in 2015 and 2016.

Countryside Stewardship (CS)

*CS Baseline: Agreement scale monitoring of Countryside Stewardship agreements* (LM0458: Jones et al 2019).

* Agreement scale monitoring of CS agreements has only consisted of a baseline survey, referred to here as the CS baseline project.
* The CS baseline project assessed 500 agreements against multiple scheme objectives, specifically: biodiversity, resource protection, historic environment, landscape character, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Resurvey of HLS and CS agreements

We have a current project which is returning to HLS and CS agreements previously surveyed, and is termed the ‘resurvey project’. The resurvey project is planning to survey 174 HLS agreements and 375 CS agreements over 3 years. The project will assess the environmental benefits provided by Agri-environment agreements and the relationship between the resurvey project and this botanical contract is set out below.

**Relationship with existing monitoring project**

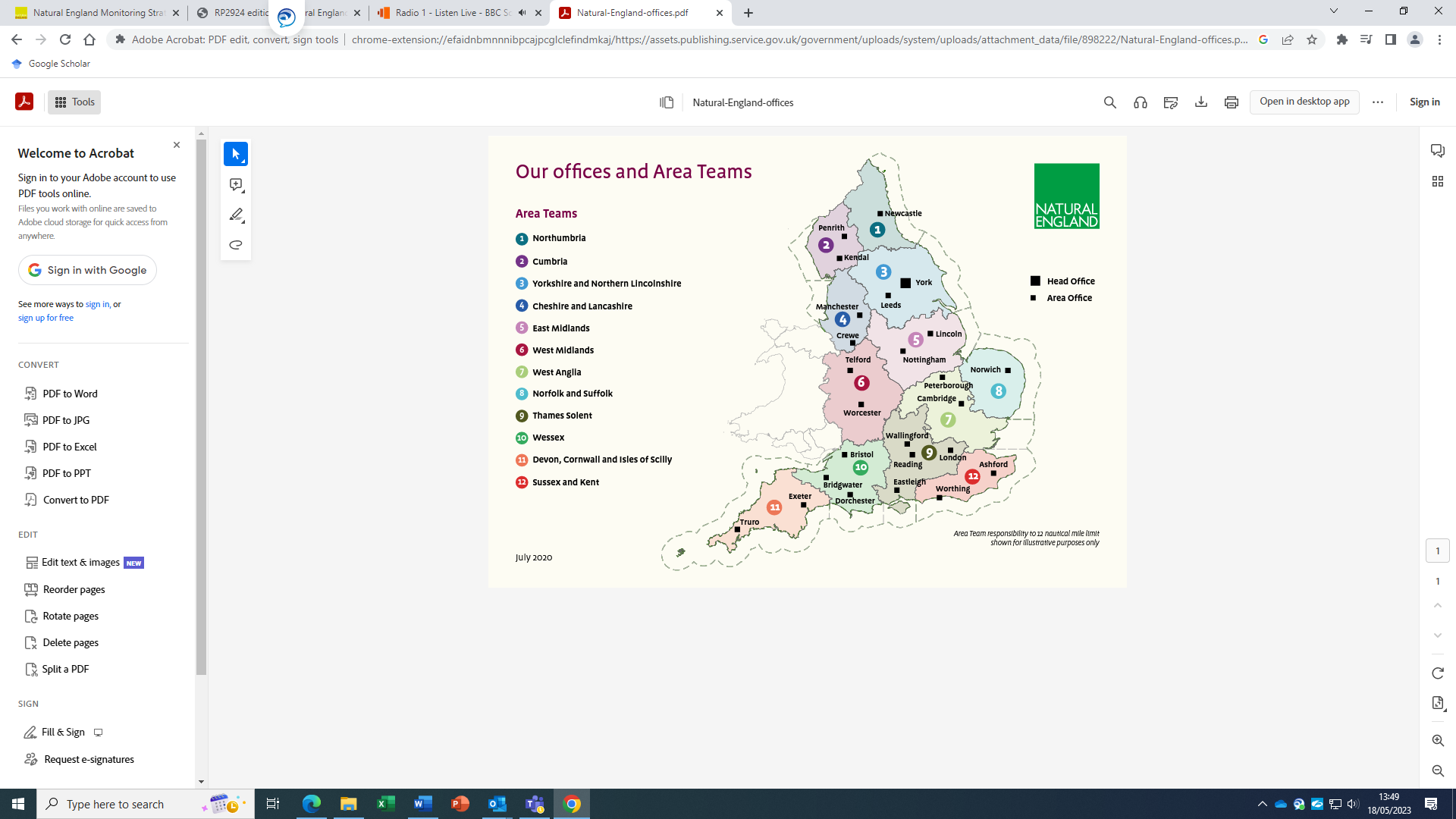
The resurvey project will visit hundreds of HLS and CS agreements which were previously surveyed in previous research. This will include biodiversity surveys of agreements, following methodologies developed for previous projects (specifically LM0445 and LM0458 referenced above). The resurvey project provides important evidence for the effectiveness of Agri-environment options, in particular by detecting change over time through returning to the same locations.

This contract will help Natural England assess the robustness of our resurvey project methodologies and the extent to which we should expect variation in species data. We want to understand whether any differences in plant communities over time are due to Agri-environment management or whether they can be explained by variation in results through differences in surveyor recording. For example, research shows that surveyors may record species cover differently, particularly for species with low cover (Morrison, LW (2016) Journal of Plant Ecology, 9:4, 367–379, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpe/rtv077>). This contract for botanical surveys will help us understand the level of variability we should expect given the methods we use in our Agri-environment monitoring.

**Locations**

Eligible field survey locations have been identified, however the exact locations will depend on agreement holder acceptance.

The regional contracts are for surveys in North and South England. The regional boundaries are based on Natural England area teams. This contract is for North England.



Natural England area team boundaries can also be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-office-locations>

**Table 1** The number of eligible agreements in each area team and the contract which covers the teams. Includes both CS and HLS agreements.

|  | Area team | Contract | Number of agreements |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Northumbria | North | 16 |
| 2 | Cumbria | North | 11 |
| 3 | Yorkshire & Northern Lincolnshire | North | 40 |
| 4 | Cheshire to Lancashire | North | 12 |
| 5 | East Midlands | North | 19 |
| 6 | West Midlands | North | 30 |
|  | Total | North | 128 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 7 | West Anglia | South | 13 |
| 8 | Norfolk & Suffolk | South | 16 |
| 9 | Thames Solent | South | 20 |
| 10 | Wessex | South | 29 |
| 11 | Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly | South | 36 |
| 12 | Sussex & Kent | South | 10 |
|  | Total | South | 124 |

The botanical surveyor would only be needed on a subset of these agreements within each region. The requirement is for 10 days of field work. Ideally each of the 10 days of field work would be on a different agreement meaning that approximately 8% of the agreement sample is covered by these botanical surveys. To help logistics the botanical contractor may be able to choose locations which are best placed geographically or which are being surveyed at a convenient time.

The resurvey project contractor will arrange land owner permission for surveys, but the successful contractor for botanical surveys will have to liaise with the resurvey project contractor to check planned dates, times and finalise other logistics.

**Methodologies**

This project requires the successful contractor to use previously developed methodologies to assess species and habitats which have been under Agri-environment agreement.

Methodologies generally follow standard quadrat approaches with multiple quadrats in each parcel (see below for more details). These quadrats are not permanently marked and will be located on a ‘W’ shaped walk on the day of the survey.

The proposed approach is that the contractors for the resurvey project will conduct surveys and temporarily mark quadrat locations once complete (please include cost of these in your bid). The successful contractor for the botanical surveys can then use the temporary markers to complete botanical surveys following behind the resurvey contractors. This will ensure that botanical data is collected in identical locations and allow greater comparability between different surveyors.

As an example of the methods, grassland options previously managed under HLS the following methodology:

Surveyors should walk in a W shape across the feature to be assessed stopping 5 times to carry out a 1x1m quadrat at each point of the W. The surveyors should assess the size of the Feature from the Agreement Map and estimate how far apart the quadrats should be to achieve a roughly even spread across the feature. The form below should be used for the HK management options listed above.

Notes:

Both indicator and undesirable species will vary between grassland features. They are defined for each feature in the FEP features manual (October 2008).

Q1-Q5 are individual quadrats and should be distributed across the whole feature. GPS should be filled in with the GPS co-ordinate of each quadrat.

Sward height should be filled in with the height in cm and should be measured with the drop disk provided. All other boxes should be filled in with % cover.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| HLS Survey - Grassland | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AGEEMENT: | | DATE: | | |  |  | SURVEYOR: | | |  |  |  |
| RLR FIELD NO.: | | DESIGNATION: | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| HLS OPTION: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Quadrat number | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | \*6 | \*7 | \*8 | \*9 | \*10 | DAFOR |
| GRID REF (\* Extra quadrats for larger parcels only; 6-10ha=6, 11-20ha=7, 21-40ha=8, 41-80ha=9, >81ha=10) | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sward height |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bare ground |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Thatch/litter |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Species: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Number species/sq m | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover wild flowers and sedges | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | % |
| Cover Lolium perenne & Trifolium repens | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | % |
| Cover undesirables | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | % |
| Cover bare ground | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | % |
| Cover litter (thatch) | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | % |
| Cover invasive trees | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | % |
| Cover of high nutrient sp. (e.g. Daisy/ creeping buttercup) | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | % |
| Does site appear to be managed for hay or silage? | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| What grazing animals are present? | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| FEP feature | Condition score |  |  | |  |  | | |  | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Notes: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Full details of methodologies can be found in field handbooks from previous surveys.

HLS Resurvey handbook:

****

CS Baseline handbook: (See section 5 for field survey and section 5.2 for the biodiversity methods. Other survey methodologies are not required for this work)

****

**Outputs and contract management**

| Reference | Deliverable | Responsible Party | Date of completion |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Output 1 | Agreement survey data | Successful contractor | Within 1 week of the agreement field survey |
| Output 2 | Factual report | Successful contractor | End of the field season, probably September 2023. |

In addition to these outputs, the following elements of the bid should be costed and, where possible, itemised:

* 7 days of field surveys;
* Planning, preparation, data management and report writing;
* Any additional resources required to enable flexibility of survey dates;
* Temporary quadrat markers to enable surveys to be conducted in same locations as other research;
* Travel and subsistence.

Timescales:

* W/C 12th June 2023– Contract award and kick-off meeting. Any issues and risks to be escalated to NE project manager as required.
* A monthly call or email update to check progress and ensure plans for remainder of summer.
* September/October 2023 – End of project call and provision of final report. Exact timing is approximate.

**Sustainability**

Natural England protects and improves the environment and is committed to reducing the sustainability impacts of its activities directly and through its supply chains. We expect the Contractor to share this commitment and adopt a sound, proactive sustainable approach in keeping with the 25 yr environmental plan/our commitments compliant with all applicable legislation. This includes understanding and reducing direct and indirect sustainability impacts and realising opportunities, including but not restricted to; resilience to climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, water use and quality, biosecurity, resource efficiency and waste, reducing the risk of pollution, biodiversity, modern slavery and equality, diversity & inclusion, negative community impacts.

As a delivery partner, the successful contractor is expected to pursue sustainability in their operations, thereby ensuring the Contracting Authority is not contracting with a supplier whose operational outputs run contrary to the Contracting Authority’s objectives. The successful contractor will need to approach the project with a focus on the entire life cycle of the project

**References**

APEM. 2021. Evaluation of the Countryside Stewardship baseline agreement scale monitoring. Report to Natural England (LM04103). URL: <http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=220&ProjectID=20369>

Jones, N., Short, C., Elliott, J., Cao, Y., Gaskell, P., Hallam, C., Laybourn, R., Breyer, J., Conyers, S., & Boatman, N. (2015). Assessing the role of advice and support on the establishment of HLS agreements. Defra Research Reports. Natural England contract reference (LM0433).

Jones, N., Conyers, S., Crowe, A., Elliott, J., Cao, Y., Newell Price, P., Gooday, R., O’Seanechain, D., Haigh, D., Forster Brown, C. and Adams, I. 2019. The Environmental Effectiveness of the Countryside Stewardship scheme; Establishing a baseline agreement monitoring sample. Report to Natural England (LM0458). URL: <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&ProjectID=19728>

Mountford, J.O. & Cooke, A.I. (editors), Amy, S.R., Baker, A., Carey, P.D., Dean, H.J., Kirby, V.G., Nisbet, A., Peyton, J.M., Pywell, R.F., Redhead, J.W. & Samrt, S.M. 2013. Monitoring the outcomes of Higher Level Stewardship: Results of a 3-year agreement monitoring programme. Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number 114 (NECR114). URL: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/11462046>

Staley, J.T., Lobley, M., McCracken, M.E., Chiswell, H., Redhead, J.W., Smart, S.M., Pescott, O.L., Jitlal, M., Amy, S.R., Dean, H.J., Ridding, L., Broughton, R. & Mountford, J.O. 2017. The environmental effectiveness of the Higher Level Stewardship scheme; Resurveying the baseline agreement monitoring sample to quantify change between 2009 and 2016. Natural England project ECM 6937 (LM0445). URL: <http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Module=More&ProjectID=19360>

**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. We would expect the supplier to invoice once upon completion of the project.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of5 months to end no later than 30/10/23. 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 – 60%

Commercial – 40%

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 | Methodology | 1 Question  Q1 (60% of technical score available) |
| Ability to deliver | 1 Question  Q2 (40% of technical score available) |
| Commercial | 40% | Whole life cost of the proposed Contract | Commercial Model | 1 Question  Q4 (100% of commercial score available) |

**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 Provide details of the methodology and approaches proposed to deliver the requirements of this project. | Your response should:  1) Demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of the requirements.  2) Set out how you will meet the flexibility required in this contract.  3) Confirm that your quotation proposal meets our specification. Please highlight any differences or provide alternatives with reasons/benefits of using those alternatives.  5) Set out how you will ensure the project is delivered safely. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ability to deliver** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q2.1 Your availability and technical capacity | You should provide details of:   1. botanical knowledge demonstrating skills at FISC level 5 or equivalent 2. quality assurance measures (e.g. internal monitoring and review processes) 3. project management techniques 4. appropriate reporting and data management 5. project specific risks and mitigation measures 6. previous performance in botanical monitoring - demonstrate delivery of at least two previous, relevant, good quality products, to time and on budget completed in the last five years. 7. Experience of staff working on the project and their skills (please include CVs which are outside page limit set out below). |

In total, responses should not exceed two sides of A4, font size 11. CVs are in addition to this limit

**Commercial (40%)**

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 deliverableused 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 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_