

**Planning Related Advice Professional Services (PRAPS)
Framework**

PART 1: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Contract Title: Rapid Evidence Review of the potential impacts of solar development on biodiversity and protected landscapes

Contract Managers' Names:

Redacted under FOIA Section 40 Personal Information

Framework Reference Number:	PRAPS102	Lot Number:	Lot 1
Atamis Number <i>(if applicable, refer to guidance)</i>	N/A	Defra Group Commercial Contact (If applicable, refer to guidance):	N/A

Date: 05/09/2025

Contract Start Date	13/10/2025				
Contract Completion Date	09/01/2026				
Procurement Route:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Direct Award</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Mini-competition</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Direct Award	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mini-competition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Direct Award	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mini-competition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Proposal return date:	22/09/2025				
Clarification Question Date:	15/09/2025				

Evaluation Criteria	
Suppliers: Failure to meet any minimum score threshold stated will result in the bid being removed from the process with no further evaluation regardless of other technical or price scores.	
Technical Weighting	60%
Price Weighting	40%
	Threshold Technical

Quality sub-criteria weightings			Weightings:
1. Approach & Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly set out the proposed approach and methodology for delivering the contract, include justification on suitability. Demonstrate understanding of what Natural England is trying to achieve through the contract. Include sufficient detail to allow a full appraisal of the suitability of the approach to deliver the project. 	50	40%
2. Proposed Staff (including CVs) and Supplier's experience/accreditations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate previous experience of ecological research and conducting rapid evidence reviews in a relevant work area. Demonstrate familiarity with UK planning and environmental policy frameworks, and in particular, Natural England's remit. Demonstrate that staff selected for the work have the appropriate skills and experience. Confirm the availability of staff put forward for the duration of the project. CVs of key staff can be included as attachments, maximum of 2 A4 pages, font size 11. 	50	25%
3. Project Management, Ability to Deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a project timeline including contingency. Detail how you intend to manage the contract to ensure that project tasks and timescales are achieved. Demonstrate quality assurance measures. 	50	25%

4. Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an assessment of the potential risks to project delivery and mitigation (including contingency in the event of delays). 	50	10%
5. Health & Safety			N/A
6. Sustainability			N/A

Specification
1. Description of work required – overall purpose & scope (including reporting requirements)
<p>Context</p> <p>The UK's <i>Clean Power 2030 Action Plan</i> estimates that between 45-47GW of solar operational capacity will be required by 2030 to meet national decarbonisation targets. In June 2025, the UK Government published its solar roadmap, setting out a strategic pathway for accelerating solar deployment across the UK. With a predicted expansion of solar development, particularly across agricultural and semi-natural landscapes, Natural England wishes to ensure its advice to policymakers and on planning applications and Development Consent Orders is informed by the most current and robust evidence.</p> <p>Background</p> <p>Natural England is commissioning a rapid review¹ of evidence to collate and evaluate existing scientific and grey literature on the potential impacts (both positive and negative) of utility-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) developments on biodiversity (with a particular focus on protected sites) and protected landscapes.</p> <p>This review should build upon the existing evidence review of the impact of solar farms on birds, bats and general ecology (NEER012), published by Natural England in 2016. The rapid evidence review will expand the scope to reflect developments in solar technology, land use pressures and updated literature.</p> <p>Initial scoping has identified the following key thematic areas for investigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birds – Direct and indirect impacts on birds, including changes to foraging behaviour and collision risk. Bats – Direct and indirect impacts on bats, including changes to commuting habitats, foraging behaviour and collision risk. Invertebrates – Direct and indirect impacts on invertebrates, including displacement of invertebrate communities. Soils – Impacts including changes in soil properties (including structure), hydrology and ecological function, particularly in relation to Best and Most Versatile agricultural land classification and soil health. Additionally, we aim to understand the reversibility of solar developments. Protected Landscapes – Impacts on landscape character and natural beauty.

¹ See <https://environmentalevidence.org/information-for-authors/10-guidance-on-the-conduct-and-standards-for-rapid-review-of-evidence/>

For each theme, Natural England seeks to understand:

- Where and how potential impacts can occur (both individual and cumulative impacts)
- Which habitats and species are most affected
- The effectiveness of current compensation and mitigation measures

In addition to ground-mounted solar farms, the review should also consider potential impacts from emerging solar technologies, such as floating solar and solar tracking installations. The review should assess whether these present different risks or opportunities for biodiversity, protected landscapes as well as other features such as peat.

The findings will inform Natural England's advice on development and the potential to develop strategic solutions for addressing impacts on protected sites. Additionally, they will identify key knowledge gaps to guide future research and monitoring.

The final output of the contract will be a report which Natural England can use to inform its advice on planning casework.

Scope of Work

The supplier will undertake a rapid review of evidence to assess the potential impacts of utility-scale solar PV developments on biodiversity and protected landscapes in England.

The review should:

- Collate and critically evaluate peer-reviewed and grey literature, including UK and international sources
- Assess the strengths and limitations of the evidence base
- Address the five thematic areas identified: birds, bats, invertebrates, soils, and protected landscapes
- Assess the effectiveness of compensation and mitigation measures currently being implemented
- Include consideration of emerging solar technologies, such as floating solar, and their potential ecological implications
- Identify gaps in knowledge and recommend areas for further research
- Produce a concise, accessible report with an executive summary, annotated bibliography (including a synopsis of each source) and recommendations.

Methodology

The evidence review should follow a transparent, systematic and reproducible approach to gathering and evaluating information.

The Collaboration for Environmental Evidence (CEE) establishes rigorous standards for systematic reviews in the environmental sciences. We expect that this review aims to meet these guidelines. For more details, please see 'Section 10: Guidance on the conduct and standards for 'Rapid Review' of evidence' on the CEE [website](#).

Natural England's guidance on evidence reviews, as set out in [Stone \(2013\)](#), may also be a useful resource. Although it doesn't specifically address rapid reviews, the guidance may still assist with the key stages of identifying, selecting and synthesising evidence.

The review should draw from peer-reviewed literature, grey literature and any relevant site-based ecological monitoring reports (where available).

Publications could be from any country but focused on the UK and relevant habitats. Include any language but focus on English studies or studies with an English abstract.

Identifying potential evidence should consist of:

- Identifying key words and search terms
- Compiling a search plan, including search questions, search approach, sources and inclusion/ exclusion criteria.
- Developing a search strategy
- Gathering the potential evidence

Assessing the effectiveness of mitigation and compensation measures

We consider that there are several ways this could be approached and would value your input on the most effective method. Below, we've outlined two possible options, but we're open to considering any alternative suggestions you may have.

Approach A: To evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation and compensation measures implemented as part of solar developments, the review could include a structured analysis of post-development monitoring data associated with planning applications. This may involve:

- Collating and categorising projects by:
 - Type of solar development
 - Location (e.g. landscape character or proximity to other solar farms) and habitat type
 - Species or ecological features monitored
 - Mitigation or compensation measures implemented
 - Whether monitoring was explicitly linked to those measures
- Assessing monitoring frameworks to determine:
 - Whether clear objectives or success criteria were defined
 - Whether monitoring reports included measurable outcomes
 - The extent to which, and the reasons why, mitigation measures were found to meet their intended goals

Approach B: As an alternative or complementary method, the review could adopt a synopsis-style approach similar to those used by [Conservation Evidence](#). These synopses evaluate the effectiveness of a wide range of actions aimed at conserving specific species group, habitats, or addressing specific conservation issues. While broader in scope than just measures suitable as mitigation and compensation implemented under the Habitats Regulations, this methodology could be refined to focus specifically on those measures that can typically be secured through the planning system.

The approach should be informed by existing Natural England reviews that have assessed mitigation effectiveness in other sectors, such as:

- [NECR132: Literature review and analysis of the effectiveness of mitigation measures to address environmental impacts of linear transport infrastructure on protected species and habitats](#)
- [NECR431: Assessment of compensatory measures for impacts of offshore windfarms on seabirds](#)

Contract Management

This contract shall be managed on behalf of Natural England by:

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The project officers will serve as the principal point of contact from Natural England. They will be responsible for the day-to-day management of this contract and will coordinate Natural England's attendance at regular meetings to review the work and ensure it meets the project's aims and objectives. As outlined below, meetings will be incorporated into the programme of works to discuss progress and facilitate feedback provision. Meetings will be organised by the contractor.

The contractor will be expected to appoint a Project Manager who will act as the principal point of contact and will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the project. The contractor will be required to regularly update the Natural England Project Officers on project progress via email and meetings, arranged by the contractor, where necessary. Any unforeseen issues arising during the contract must be raised with the Project Officers as early as possible to facilitate prompt resolution. The contractor is responsible for assessing the risks associated with the project as planned and for putting in place mitigation measures to respond to them.

All contact with Natural England Staff will take place virtually via MS Teams or on the telephone and/or via email.

Outputs

- The supplier must comply with Natural England publishing standards for commissioned reports (NECR000) and use the report template provided on the page, following the guidance within it.
- The supplier must not make any changes to the templates, including to heading styles and font sizes.
- The supplier must submit the final report draft as a Word file (not PDF) to the Natural England contact.
- The report should be submitted according to the timescales provided.

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

Skills / experience as set out in PRAPS Lot 1 specification, potentially with skills in lots 2, 8, 10 and 11. We expect that this work is signed off at director grade.

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

Please provide details of the project timeline and how you will deliver the work to the required standard, including management and quality control.			
Task no.	Meetings and deliverables	Completion date	Payment Schedule (%)
1	<p>Meeting - Kick-off Meeting:</p> <p>Online meeting with NE colleagues to confirm understanding of scope, expectations and initiate the project.</p>	Early October	
	<p>Deliverable - In-depth Methodology and Work Plan:</p> <p>Submission of a detailed methodology, which should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive search strategy (incl. research questions, the search approach, sources to be searched and clear inclusion and exclusion criteria) • A summary of the evidence selection process and outline how results will be screened and how the quality of each source will be determined. • How data will be extracted, synthesised and summarised. <p>In addition, this deliverable will include a comprehensive work plan which will include a work breakdown and a refined project timeline with key milestones for each stage.</p>	Mid-October	20%
2	<p>Meeting - Methodology and Work Plan Review:</p> <p>Meeting to discuss Natural England's comments on the Methodology and Work Plan.</p>	Late October	
5	<p>Deliverable – Draft Evidence Review Report:</p> <p>Submission of comprehensive first draft of the evidence review of key findings will be submitted to Natural England for review and feedback.</p> <p>We expect that all research and data collection will be completed, including the analysis of identified evidence.</p> <p>The draft will be presented as a skeleton document, outlining the complete structure and layout of the final report. Each section will be accompanied by a clear summary of its content and key findings, providing a comprehensive overview of the research while allowing Natural England to provide early-stage input on the</p>	End of November	40%

	direction and focus of the final report.		
3	Meeting - Draft Report Review: Meeting to discuss Natural England's comments on the Draft Report.	Early December	
6	Deliverable – Final Evidence Review Report: Submission of the complete and final evidence review report, incorporating all feedback and agreed-upon revisions from the working draft.	End of December	40%

4. Risk
<i>Note: This section is to be used to detail any risks relevant to the project, i.e. Programme deliverable dates, data, consultees etc.</i>
5. Health and Safety Requirements
N/A – as desk-based assessment.
6. Sustainability Considerations
N/A – as desk-based assessment.

Overall Costs (excluding VAT)	£25,852.38
Overall Costs (including VAT)	£31,022.85

By signing this form *TEP* agree to provide the services stated above for the cost set out in your Cost Proposal and in accordance with the Planning Related Advice Professional Services (PRAPS) Framework – Call-Off Contract.

Supplier Project Manager:

Signature:

Date:

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Planning Related Advice Professional Services (PRAPS) Framework	
PART 3: AGREEMENT	
To be completed by Framework Manager and Authority Contract Manager	
Approved by Framework Manager: 	Redacted under FOIA Section 40 Personal Information
Contract Award Date: 	
Agreed by Supplier: 	
Approved by Contract Manager: 	
Terms and Conditions	All call off contracts under the PRAPS Framework are subject to the terms and conditions agreed at framework award.
You must have a purchase order number from Natural England before you start any work in connection with this proposal.	

Planning Related Advice Professional Services (PRAPS) Framework

PART 4

Change Control Schedule

Notes	<p style="background-color: #90EE90; margin: 0;">To be completed by Contracting Authority Project Manager</p> <p>Any extensions, price changes or amendments to existing orders need to be discussed with the Framework Manager before being agreed with the Contractor. Please remember to amend your Purchase Order in SOP if necessary.</p> <p>The table below should be used to record and authorise the agreed changes throughout the project. A Change Control Notice (CCN) should be completed for substantial changes to the project and a summary provided in the table below.</p> <p>Send a copy of the revised Project Form and CCN (if used) to the Contractor once the change has been agreed and approved. A copy should also be sent to your Commercial Lead if a Atamis reference has been provided.</p>
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10. Change Control
 All amendments to project scope, timetable or costs must be submitted to and approved by the Contracting Authority PM prior to implementing the change.

Change Details	CCN Ref. (if applicable)	Revised completion date (if applicable)	Revised Project Cost (if applicable)	Approved by (Framework Manager / Date)