Request for Quotation

**Design engaging and effective templates for the processes of notifying Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the making of Protected Site Strategies (PSS)**

August 2024

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**Design engaging and effective templates for the processes of notifying Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the making of Protected Site Strategies (PSS)**

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: [RFQmailboxPSS@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:RFQmailboxPSS@naturalengland.org.uk)

Date:  **20/09/24**

Time: 17:00

Ensure you include the name of the quotation and ‘Final Submission’ in the subject field to make it clear that it is your response.

Contact Details and Timetable

Olivia Hancock-Tomlin 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 | 30/08/24 |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 13/09/24 17:00 BST/BMT |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 20/09/24 17:00 BST/BMT |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 11/10/24 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | w/c 14/10/24 |
| Intended Delivery Date | **Feb 2025** |

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 Good and Services Terms & Conditions (used for purchases under £50k)

can be located on the [Natural England Website](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement)Procurement at Natural England - Natural England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

and will be applicable to any contract awarded as a result of this quotation process. The Authority will not accept any changes to these terms and conditions proposed by a supplier.

Suppliers should note that the quotation provided by the successful bidder will form part of the Contract.

Prices

Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, exclusive of VAT.

Disclosure

All Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement, including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice. For these purposes, the Authority may disclose within Government any details contained in your quotation. The information will not be disclosed outside Government during the procurement.

In addition, the Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which provide a public right of access to information held by public bodies. In accordance with these two statutes, the Authority may be required to disclose information contained in your quotation to any person who submits a request for information pursuant to those statutes.

Further to the Government’s transparency agenda, all UK Government organisations must advertise on Contract Finder in accordance with the following publication thresholds:

* Central Contracting Authority’s: £12,000
* Sub Central Contracting Authority’s and NHS Trusts: £30,000

For the purpose of this RFQ the Authority is classified as a Central Contracting Authority with a publication threshold of £12,000 inclusive of VAT.

If this opportunity is advertised via Contracts Finder, we are obliged to publish details of the awarded contract including who has won the contract, the contract value, and indicate whether the winning supplier is a small and medium-sized enterprise (“SMEs”) or voluntary organisation or charity. A copy of the contract must also be published with confidential information redacted.

By submitting a Response, you consent to these terms as part of the procurement.

Disclaimers

Whilst the information in this RFQ and any supporting information referred to herein or provided to you by the Authority have been prepared in good faith the Authority does not warrant that this information is comprehensive or that it has been independently verified.

The Authority does not:

* make any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFQ;
* accept any liability for the information contained in the RFQ or for the fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information; or
* accept any liability for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation or any other liability which cannot lawfully be excluded) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

Any supplier considering entering into contractual relationships with the Authority following receipt of the RFQ should make its own investigations and independent assessment of the Authority and its requirements for the goods and/or services and should seek its own professional financial and legal advice.

Protection of Personal Data

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 the supplier must agree to the following:

You must only process any personal data in strict accordance with instructions from the Authority.

* You must ensure that all the personal data that we disclose to you or you collect on our behalf under this agreement are kept confidential.
* You must take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees who have access to personal data.
* Only employees who may be required to assist in meeting the obligations under this agreement may have access to the personal data.
* Any disclosure of personal data must be made in confidence and extend only so far as that which is specifically necessary for the purposes of this agreement.
* You must ensure that there are appropriate security measures in place to safeguard against any unauthorised access or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage or disclosure of the personal data.
* On termination of this agreement, for whatever reason, the personal data must be returned to us promptly and safely, together with all copies in your possession or control.

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

For the purposes of the Regulations the Authority is the data processor.

The personal information that we have asked you provide on individuals (data subjects) that will be working for you on this contract will be used in compiling the tender list and in assessing your offer. If you are unsuccessful the information will be held and destroyed within two years of the award of contracts. If you are awarded a contract it will be retained for the duration of the contract and destroyed within seven years of the contract’s expiry.

We may monitor the performance of the individuals during the execution of the contract, and the results of our monitoring, together with the information that you have provided, will be used in determining what work is allocated under the contract, and in any renewal of the contract or in the award of future contracts of a similar nature. The information will not be disclosed to anyone outside the Authority without the consent of the data subject, unless the Authority is required by law to make such disclosures.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

The Client is striving to create a diverse and inclusive working environment where every individual has equality of opportunity to progress and to apply their unique insights to making the UK a great place for living. The Service Provider is expected to respect this commitment in all dealings with Natural England staff and service users.

Suppliers are expected to;

* support Defra group to achieve its Public Sector Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and to support delivery of [Defra group’s Equality & Diversity Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024).
* meet the standards set out in the [Government’s Supplier Code of Conduct](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplier-code-of-conduct)
* work with Defra group to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion impacts are addressed (positive and negative) in the goods, services and works we procure, barriers are removed and opportunities realised.

Sustainable Procurement

Addressing global sustainability impacts and realising additional community benefits within commercial activity is core to Defra group’s approach, working with its supply chain is key to achieving sustainable outcomes. In addition to supporting Defra group to meet its outcomes we look to understand and reduce negative sustainability impacts associated with our commercial activity and realise benefits.

The Client encourages its suppliers to share these values, work to address negative impacts and realise opportunities, measure performance and success.

Suppliers are expected to have an understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals, the interconnections between them and the relevance to the Goods, Services and works procured on the Client’s behalf.

Conflicts of Interest

The concept of a conflict of interest includes but is not limited to any situation where an Involved Person or Relevant Body has directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure and/or affect the integrity of the contract award.

We expect suppliers to mitigate appropriately against any real or perceived conflict of interest through their work with government. A supplier with a position of influence gained through a contract should not use that position to unfairly disadvantage any other supplier or reduce the potential for future competition

Where the supplier is aware of any circumstances giving rise to a conflict of interest or has any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise you should inform the Authority of this as soon as possible (whether before or after they have submitted a quotation). Tenderers should remain alert to the possibility of conflicts of interest arising at all stages of the procurement and should update the Authority if any new circumstances or information arises, or there are any changes to information already provided to the Authority. Failure to do so, and/or to properly manage any conflicts of interest may result in a quotation being rejected.

Provided that it has been carried out in an open, fair and transparent manner, routine pre-market engagement carried out by the Authority should not represent a conflict of interest for the supplier.

Section 2: The Invitation

Specification of Requirements

1. **Introduction**

The following contract opportunity invites suitably experienced suppliers to design digital and hard copy templates for the stages of SSSI notification and the making of PSS from:

* Early engagement
* Through to formal consultation
* Through to implementation

These stages are detailed in NE’s guidance on SSSIs for planners or landowners which informs them of rules they must follow when managing the land that they own or occupy within a SSSI:

[Sites of special scientific interest: managing your land - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest)

For occupied or owned land, Natural England can select all or part of it for protection. Natural England will do this when it believes the site has features of special interest, such as its:

* wildlife
* geology
* Landform

Natural England will ‘notify’ (or designate) the land as a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). The section [New SSSI notifications](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest#new-sssi-notifications) tells you more about the designation process and your rights.

Protected Site Strategies will be ambitious, formal, locally driven collaborative partnerships which aim to address a number of environmental issues within each PSS through holistic approaches. They are each underpinned by the Protected Site Strategies legislation in section 110 of the Environment Act. See blogpost [Springing into Action with Protected Site Strategies for Nature’s Recovery – Natural England (blog.gov.uk).](https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2022/06/16/springing-into-action-with-protected-site-strategies-for-natures-recovery/)

Natural England and our Partners are researching and developing the components of the mechanism for establishing a PSS through to formally making a PSS and delivering the outcomes the PSS sets out to achieve. Each PSS will be made through a period of formal consultation. To achieve effective formal public consultation, the information in the PSS needs to be presented in a way that appeals, and is accessible, to external stakeholders. The contract requirement is to therefore develop the formal public consultation section of our Protected Site Strategies Advisory Guidance. This section will communicate the processes of how to make each PSS.

A similar process is required to notify new Protected Site SSSIs. Following a review of current practice, there is a need to develop similar internal guidance and an accompanying template for SSSI formal designation. For both the SSSI notification template and the Protected Site Strategies making template, the requirement is for engaging and effective digital and hard copy templates that allow accessibility and uniformity for stakeholders to understand and engage with these processes.

The focus of each Protected Site Strategy is for measures to address nature recovery on and around Protected Sites in a given geographical area. This commonly involves addressing a number of environmental issues through a holistic locally driven approach. We define Protected Sites for the purposes of this specification as SSSIs, SACs, RAMSAR sites, SPAs and MCZs. In parallel with this commission, we are commissioning work to develop other sections of the first version of Protected Site Strategies Advisory Guidance. This guidance aims to provide Natural England with:

* A means to enable stronger partnerships between Natural England and key stakeholders by illustrating how measures to address environmental issues impacting the biodiversity and geodiversity of protected sites bring benefits to stakeholders’ own business objectives.
* A way of building greater confidence in how solutions to the challenges faced by protected sites can be resourced and effectively implemented, attracting stakeholders to support PSS
* A visual toolkit or toolkits on how Protected Site Strategies can help enhance stakeholders’ own plans and projects that, together, address environmental issues in local landscape.
  1. **Background to Natural Engl**and

Natural England is the government’s adviser for the natural environment in England. Our remit is to ensure sustainable stewardship of the land and sea so that people and nature can thrive. Within England, we are responsible for:

* promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity;
* conserving and enhancing the landscape;
* securing the provision and improvement of facilities for the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment;
* promoting access to the countryside and open spaces;
* and contributing to social and economic well-being through the sustainable management of the natural environment.

Natural England’s priorities are to secure a healthy natural environment; a sustainable, low carbon economy; a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply. Further information can be found at: [Natural England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england)

* 1. **Background to Protected Site Strategies (PSS)**

Section 110 of the Environment Act (2021) affords Natural England the ability to prepare and publish ‘Protected Site Strategies’ (PSS) aimed at:

a) Improving the conservation and management of a protected site; by

b) Managing the impact of plans, projects, or other activities (wherever undertaken) on the conservation and management of the protected site.

**The PSS Research and Development (R&D) Project** is co-ordinated by Natural England in partnership with a diverse group of partners from farmers to research institutions and other government bodies. The project initially focussed on five pilot areas across the country covering a range of environmental and social contexts and has subsequently gathered further research insights from a number of other locations. The overarching aim of the PSS R&D project is to generate learning to further understandings of how and when a PSS could be deployed. Therefore, learnings from the PSS R&D project will shape how our most precious habitats, species and geodiversity are managed at and around protected sites. The PSS Advisory Guidance will bring these learnings together to illustrate what is needed to develop a Protected Site Strategy. The PSS template and section on the formal making of a PSS will make up an integral part of this.

* 1. **SSSI notification**

**Why are sites designated?**

Sites are designated to afford their special interest features (habitat, species, geology or physical geography) legal protection through international and home legislation. Natural England’s [Designation Strategy](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/2647412?category=10001)  provides information on how we deliver our statutory duties and the Government's national and international obligations. Our current [designation programme](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-designations-programme-for-areas-sites-and-trails) is published on Gov.uk. Information about all our protected sites including citations, features, management and monitoring objectives is on [Designated Sites View.](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/)

Parliament has also given NE powers to amend existing SSSI notifications, either by varying interest features or including additional land, or both. Where land is no longer considered to be of special interest, we also have a power of 'denotification' to remove an existing notification from a SSSI, or any part of a SSSI. In England there are over 4,100 SSSIs with a combined area of over a million hectares.

Further information on [how SSSIs are designated](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest#new-sssi-notifications) can be found on Gov.UK.

The table below outlines the key stages for engaging with stakeholders, during a SSSI notification process:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Contact stage | Format | Description |
| 1 | Survey access letter | This is the first stage of contact with landowners. The purpose is to make access arrangements for surveyors and offer conversations/meetings to explain the notification process. |
| 2 | Pre-notification letter | Landowners are informed of the survey results and what the next steps of the notification process will be. |
| 3a | Notification letter and information pack | This is a legal part of the notification process. Landowners and stakeholders are sent legal documents and further information about how to manage a SSSI. This starts the formal consultation process. |
| 3b | Consultation online questionnaire | Landowners, wider stakeholders and members of the public can submit their representations in response to the SSSI notification consultation via [Defra’s Citizen Space](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/) online portal. |
| 4 | Confirmation letter | This is a legal part of the notification process. Statutory consultees, including all landowners, will be written to, to formally confirm or withdraw the SSSI. |

We would like the elements of (and reasons behind) this process to be more accessible through designing and using a visual digital and hard copy template that clearly explains the benefits of SSSIs to local people and stakeholders- green space and nature connection are proven to benefit both physical and mental health. This should be an updated, more visually accessible version that includes elements of the existing ‘Sites of Special Scientific Interest: A brief guide for land owners and occupiers’ pdf attached alongside this RFQ.

This relates to the collaborative element of Protected Sites Strategies whereby multi-sectoral and disciplinary approaches are needed to overcome the challenges faced by protected sites through means that involve and benefit local stakeholders.

* 1. **Opportunity Definition**

Sub-section 4 of section 110 of the Act, outlines four ‘limbs’ of a PSS, which are:

* + 1. **Evidence based** - Include an assessment of the impacts and pressures.
    2. **Action Oriented** - Include measures to avoid, mitigate and compensate.
    3. **Integrated** - Identify other plans, project and strategies of benefit to the site.
    4. **Ambitious** - Address any other matter of relevance.

In addition, PSS legislation contains a ‘Duty of Cooperation’ (sub-section 5 & 7) which will ensure that PSS development will be a collaborative, stakeholder led process.

We are interested in framing the ‘How to make a PSS and how to notify a SSSI’ Advisory Guidance section so that we can know how:

* It can be used to support the stakeholder engagement aspects of PSS development
* It can help a PSS to be more ambitiousin its scope. That is, how can a PSS help achieve both measurable benefits for the biodiversity and geodiversity interest of a local area exemplified by a Protected Site or group of related Protected Sites. Alongside this, how can a PSS address other matters in and around the site, which will offer additional social and economic benefits to local communities and stakeholders. This guidance will provide evidence to help understand how to deliver a PSS in this context**.**

1. **Main Task**

Considering the opportunity outlined above, the main task is to design engaging templates and accompanying guidance on the above processes. This will involve working with Natural England and our partners to clearly set out the stages of how to formally make a PSS and how to formally notify a new SSSI. We would like both templates to be in the same format so that they are accessible and user-friendly. Please see examples of existing visual digital templates:

[Toolkits and Guidance - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/)

[Toolkit: Effective Delivery of Strategic Sites (local.gov.uk)](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Toolkit-Effective%20Delivery%20of%20Strategic%20Sites%20-%20September%202021%20V2.pdf)

The main outputs will be:

* Desk study research into contemporary approaches to the design of templates for this section of the Advisory Guidance.
* Formation of the first version of the Protected Site Strategies Advisory Guidance section on how to make a PSS
* Formation of revised guidance and template for SSSI notification, based on the desk study research and other research insights gleaned by the PSS project team.
* Produce a storyboard style draft to reflect the recommended approach. This could be presented in PDF format with an accompanying PowerPoint presentation. We are, however, open to alternative suitable digital presentations.
* The resolved design to frame the templates and accompanying guidance in a way that is visually attractive. In the case of Protected Site Strategies, the guidance will be hosted on our SPOL site with capacity to later share with partners on their external websites. The SSSI notification guidance is also currently hosted on SPOL [Site Selection & Designation (sharepoint.com).](https://defra.sharepoint.com/teams/Team2094/SitePages/Designations.aspx)

The audience:

* We are working with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) [Welcome to the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) | Local Government Association](https://www.local.gov.uk/welcome-planning-advisory-service-pas) who are undertaking research into the key Local Authority audience for the making of Protected Site Strategies.
* Our PSS colleagues have been working extensively to research how to make a PSS and we have clear guidelines on the process of SSSI notification. This information will be shared with the successful contractor to be inputted into the design template.
* We are also connected with other Defra group officers
* We therefore have valuable insights into our target audiences, which we will share with the successful contractor

**Objectives:**

Overall, this piece will show:

* The process for how to make a Protected Site Strategy
* The process behind how to notify a SSSI
* How visual tools can help engage people with SSSI notification and Protected Site Strategies which can both subsequently help deliver multiple benefits for nature and people
* How a contemporary approach can showcase tangible routes to PSS and of SSSI notification

This piece will be an important attractor of stakeholders to encourage support for Protected Site Strategies

This will form part of the wider guidance on how to deliver and roll out future PSSs.

1. **Methods and contract management**

The successful Contractor will need to apply suitable methods to meet the project aims and objectives outlined above. The contractor should be prepared to take a flexible approach and work closely with the NE project team to help evolve the direction of the toolkit throughout the course of the project. The model, relevant research insights, and key PSS and SSSI information will be provided by NE and partners who will work with the contractor to shape this into a visually informative and accessible piece. The quotation should include a proposed methodology and examples of previous design templates created by the contractor. Whilst there is no specific word limit for answering the weighted questions, please only include information which directly addresses the question. Additional information not relevant will not score extra marks and may make your response more difficult to evaluate.

**Governance:**

During the W/C 14th October, a start-up meeting will be held between the project officer and the contractor. The contractor will attend advisor group meetings during the course of the project to monitor progress and agree on content and materials. Natural England will be responsible for organising these.

Dates can be discussed and agreed once the contractor has been appointed.

Specific dates for deliverables are detailed below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity | Date |
| Issue of Request for Quotation | **30/08/24** |
| Deadline for submission of clarification questions | 13/09/24 |
| Deadline for submission of quotes | 20/09/24 |
| Evaluation of quotes | w/c 23/09/24 |
| Contract award | 11/10/24 |
| Duration of contract | **Until Feb 2025** |

**Payment**

The Authority will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award. These can be arranged in stage payments if requested, otherwise Natural England will pay on completion.

The Authority’s preference is for all invoices to be sent electronically, quoting a valid Purchase Order number. Suppliers can invoice after key milestones or after work has been completed.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded to end no later than February 2025. 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 extensions shall be agreed in writing in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

* 1. **Data ownership, intellectual property rights and copyright**

All data captured and produced shall be fully owned by and copyrighted to Natural England. This shall include any intellectual property rights that might otherwise impede on Natural England’s usage and data sharing of the outputs. Natural England may share any project outputs with third parties including for the purposes of additional analyses outside the final scope of any contract awarded against this statement of requirements. Any data supplied by Natural England to potential bidders and the successful contractor are for use in this project only and should not be retained once the bidding process (for unsuccessful bidders) or project (for the successful contractor) has been completed. In addition, neither bidders nor the successful contractor must pass such data on to any third parties unless with explicit prior permission from Natural England. The contractor is responsible for ensuring that all products submitted are of a satisfactory standard. The Natural England Nominated Officer may undertake a QA review of all project deliverables, including image analyses, prior to approving subsequent payment for the work.

1. **Other considerations**

In support of this contract, we will provide the successful framework supplier with:

* Project support from dedicated project lead.
* Relevant available data from previous work.
* An informative model from NE
* An inception meeting with oversight from a steering group
* Hands on discussions with the contractor throughout the process

**Quotation Submission**

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 Methodology

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 | Understanding of Natural England’s requirements | 1 Questions  Q1 Please outline your understanding of the project requirements and provide examples that demonstrate previous experience and knowledge of working with SPOL and a range of media platforms (technical and design experience of these platforms is required). Please provide examples of working with government and local authority organisations. (30% of technical score available) |
| Methodology | **1 Question**  **Q2** Using examples of previous work, please submit an outline for the approaches and methodologies you will use to deliver this contract and meet the requirements listed above**,** giving justification for the methods proposed. A detailed methodology of the approach to initial research criteria is required. (25% of technical score available) |
| Key personnel | 1 Question  Q3 Please include details of the expertise shown in previous work that involved creating a digital and hardcopy template or similar approaches. Please provide key personnel, CVs and/or online portfolios/links. (30% of technical score available) |
| Quality Assurance measures | 1 Question  Q4 Please provide a timeline for the project that matches with our requirements. Please also provide details in this section of how the project will be managed, how the project will be quality assured as well as any risks and dependencies that will affect delivery of the project and measures that will be taken to mitigate these. This will include how absences of any key design and management personnel will be mitigated. (15% of technical score available) |
| Commercial | 30% | Whole life cost of the proposed Contract | Commercial Model | Q4 Please provide a cost breakdown of key tasks indicating milestone deliverables, and preferred payment and invoicing schedule (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.

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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| E01 - Understanding of Natural England’s requirements | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q1 Please outline your understanding of the requirement based on the specifications provided.  (30% of technical score available)  Responses should not exceed two sides of A4 with font size 11.  A minimum score of 50 for this question is required to be met. Any score below this will be scored as a Fail. | Your response must demonstrate, but is not limited to:   * An understanding of our opportunity definition * A thorough understanding of the aims and objectives * Experience of working on visual digital template pieces * Experience of working with central or local government |

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| E02 - Methodology | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q2 Please submit an outline for the approaches and methodologies you will use to deliver this contract and meet the requirements listed above.  (30% of technical score available)  Responses should not exceed two sides of A4 with font size 11.  A minimum score of 50 for this question is required to be met. Any score below this will be scored as a Fail. | To enable this assessment to be made, you must:   * Provide an outline proposal of how you will deliver the project, which is clear, practical, achievable, cost-effective * Within the above, clearly outline the formal processes you will follow to create the template, ensuring methodological transparency. * Provide a description of tasks and the way in which you will approach them. * Outline how you intend to work with the Natural England project team, including strategies for iterative feedback processes. |

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| E03 – Project and risk management | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q3 Project and risk management | Your response should include:   1. Details of organisational and project management skills to deliver all aspects of the requirement in full. 2. Include a proposed timeline for all elements of the work 3. Identify key resources/time allocated for each deliverable 4. Unforeseen risks- e.g. staff availability 5. How you will mitigate any key staff absences |

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/key personnel used in the delivery of this requirement.

Calculation Method

The method for calculating the weighted scores is as follows:

* Commercial

Score = (Lowest Quotation Price / Supplier’s Quotation Price) x 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:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 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

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| 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

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| 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 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

