

Request for Quotation

LIFE18NAT/UK/000039 – LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES: Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed

# Independent financial audit of an EU funded project





10/05/23

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# Request for Quotation

### LIFE18NAT/UK/000039 - LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES: Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed

### Independent Audit

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: [rebecca.l.smith@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.l.smith@naturalengland.org.uk)

Date: 10/06/24

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

Rebecca Smith 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 | 13th May 2024 |
| Deadline for clarification questions | 12 noon on 23rd May 2024 |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 12 noon on 10th June 2024 |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 25th June 2024 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 8th July 2024 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration | 8th July 2024 – 31st January 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).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Words/Expression | Meaning |
| “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 to the RFQ 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).

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, inclusive of VAT.

## Disclosure

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

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

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

● Central Contracting Authority’s: £12,000

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

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

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

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

## Disclaimers

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

The Authority does not:

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

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

## Protection of Personal Data

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

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

● You must ensure that all the personal data that we disclose to you or you collect on our behalf under this agreement are kept confidential.

● You must take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees who have access to personal data.

Only employees who may be required to assist in meeting the obligations under this agreement may have access to the personal data.

● Any disclosure of personal data must be made in confidence and extend only so far as that which is specifically necessary for the purposes of this agreement.

● You must ensure that there are appropriate security measures in place to safeguard against any unauthorised access or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage or disclosure of the personal data.

● On termination of this agreement, for whatever reason, the personal data must be returned to us promptly and safely, together with all copies in your possession or control.

## General Data Protection Regulations 2018

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

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

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

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

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

Suppliers are expected to;

● support Defra group to achieve its Public Sector Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and to support delivery of Defra group’s Equality & Diversity Strategy. ● meet the standards set out in the Government’s 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

## 2.1 Specification

2.1.1 Background to Natural England

[Natural England](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england) is the government’s advisor on the natural environment. We provide practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England’s natural wealth for the benefit of everyone.

Natural England was formally established on 1st October 2006 following the successful passage of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 through Parliament. We are an independent statutory Non-Departmental Public Body. Our remit is to ensure sustainable stewardship of the land and sea so that people and nature can thrive. It is our responsibility to see that England’s rich natural environment can adapt and survive intact for future generations to enjoy.

Natural England runs several externally funded projects. One of which is LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES (LIFE18 NAT/UK/000039), which is co-funded by the European Union LIFE 2014-2020 programme.

Further information on the Authority can be found at: [Natural England](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/).

2.1.2 Background to the specific work area relevant to this purchase

The LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES: ‘Reducing and Mitigating Erosion and Disturbance Impacts affecting the Seabed’ (LIFE 18 NAT/UK/000039) project runs from July 2019 - Oct 2024 and will improve the condition of seagrass beds in five Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) between Essex and Isles of Scilly. This will be achieved by restoration, demonstration and reducing recreational pressures. Promoting awareness, communications and inspiring better care of sensitive seabed habitats will be key.

The project includes five project sites (Essex Estuaries SAC, Solent Maritime SAC, Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC, Fal and Helford SAC and Isles of Scilly SAC), and five project partners (referred to as associated beneficiaries):

* Natural England (lead partner also known as coordinating beneficiary);
* Marine Conservation Society;
* Ocean Conservation Trust;
* Plymouth City Council/Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum; and the
* Royal Yachting Association and the Green Blue.

As a result, we work as a dispersed project team.

The total project expenditure is projected to be €2,911,930; 60% funded by the European Union. Two pre-financing payments totalling 80% have already been made by the Union with the final payment being made at end of the project, on receipt of the:

* Final Report,
* financial statements, and a
* certificate on the financial statements prepared by an independent auditor.

These need to be submitted to the Commission by the end of January 2025 (three months after the completion of the delivery of the project i.e. 31 October 2024).

Natural England therefore needs to appoint an auditor to provide an independent report of the factual findings on the costs claimed under the [Grant Agreement](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/document/download/5d12339e-0e07-420a-bf53-4c57dff4ebae_en?filename=Model%20grant%20agreement%202018.pdf) (a copy of the final Grant Agreement will be supplier to the successful auditor).

Annex 1 provides more detail about the project budget and the supporting documentation for our expenditure. For more information about the project see [www.saveourseabed.co.uk](http://www.saveourseabed.co.uk).

2.1.3 Requirement

This section sets out the contract requirements. Suppliers must explain how they will deliver the required output within the specified timeframe and to budget. They must further demonstrate that they have the required skills and experience. Information on how this will be evaluated can be found in section 2.3, Evaluation Methodology.

**Objective and scope**

Natural England is required to submit to the Commission a certificate on the Financial Statement, in the form of an independent report of factual findings produced by an external auditor. This is in support of the payment requested by Natural England under [Article I.4.1. of the Grant Agreement](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/document/download/5d12339e-0e07-420a-bf53-4c57dff4ebae_en?filename=Model%20grant%20agreement%202018.pdf). The Commission requires this Report as the balance payment of costs requested by Natural England is conditional on its factual findings.

Natural England therefore requires an auditor to provide an independent report of the **factual findings** on the costs incurred by itself and Ocean Conservation Trust (the other partners are out of scope of this contract) before submitting the project’s final financial statement to the Commission.

This work must be undertaken in line with procedures outlined by the Commission (see Audit Methodology for more detail). The Report should describe the purpose and the agreed-upon procedures of the engagement in sufficient detail to enable Natural England and the Commission to understand the nature and extent of the procedures performed by the Auditor.

As this contract is not an assurance engagement the Auditor does not provide an audit opinion and expresses no assurance. The Commission derives its assurance by drawing its own conclusions from the factual findings reported by the Auditor on the Financial Statement and the payment request of the Beneficiary.

In accordance with Article II.27 of the Grant Agreement, the Agency and the Court of Auditors have the right to audit any work carried out under the project for which costs are claimed from the Union, including the work related to this engagement.

**Audit Methodology**

The audit needs to be:

* undertaken in accordance with the Commission’s audit methodology;
* use the evidence obtained from these procedures as the basis for the Report of factual findings; and
* presented in the Commission’s audit model report template.

The procedures and report format are provided in the [Terms of Reference for the Certificate on the Financial Statements LIFE Action grants (Call 2017/2018) – see section 1.9 Scope of Work – Compulsory Report format and procedures to be performed.](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/document/download/77526dde-ecec-4870-916a-cea96b54c822_en?filename=LifeTermeReferenceCertificate2017-2018_update06032023.doc) **This website must be checked to ensure the most recent template/guidance is used before commencing work.**

The Auditor designs and carries out his work in accordance with the objective and scope of this engagement and the procedures to be performed as specified below.

When performing these procedures the Auditor may apply techniques such as inquiry and analysis, (re)computation, comparison, other clerical accuracy checks, observation, inspection of records and documents, inspection of assets and obtaining confirmations or any others deemed necessary in carrying out these procedures. The procedures are carried out with regard to the costs claimed by the beneficiaries and taking into account the Grant Agreement and the related Annexes.

The Auditor will include the **result** of the checks performed in the last column of the table included on pages 9 – 22.

**Timeframe**

The auditor is required to undertake the sampling, testing and reporting after the end of the project (31 October 2024) and complete it by the middle of January 2025.

**Location of work**

As a dispersed project team all our project files and records are held electronically. The audit will therefore be remote with all documentation supplied electronically. Given the sensitive nature of some of the information, we will require a secure Data Drop site e.g. SharePoint Online to be provided by the auditors so that we can share our information securely.

In addition:

**Natural England**

Hard copies of the signed LIFE timesheets (where required) are stored at the Natural England Exeter Office: Ground Floor, Sterling House, Dix's Field, Exeter, EX1 1QA.

The CGI payroll system, formerly Logica payroll system, is maintained and managed by SSCL and is used to make salary payments to Natural England staff. SSCL provide a reporting tool which can be used by Natural England’s finance team to report salary payments. This reporting tool is available through Elle Padfield the NE External Funding Finance Business Partner.

Original payslips are held by SSCL (Shared Services Connected Ltd) who manage the payroll for Natural England. However, these documents can be requested in advance of the audit if required.

**Ocean Conservation Trust**

Hard copies of information are held at their office: National Marine Aquarium, Rope Walk, Coxside, Plymouth PL4 0LF.

**Previous experience and timescales**

The Auditor appointed should:

* Have experience of auditing European Union financed projects, ideally EU LIFE funded projects.
* Be able to schedule the audit and submission to the timescale prescribed and in the report format required by EU LIFE (see above).

2.1.4 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.

2.1.5 Outputs and Contract Management

**Project milestones**

The project milestones are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project milestone** | **Detail** | **Date** |
| Deadline for receipt of tenders |  | 12 noon 10th June 2024 |
| Contract awarded |  | 25th June 2024 |
| Inception meeting | To discuss schedule of works, any updates or changes/amendments to the LIFE audit guidance, provision of information etc. prior to commencing the audit of the project. | w/c 15th July 2024 |
| NE to provide the financial statements for sample | | 15th November 2024 |
| Sample listing to be provided to NE | | 22nd November 2024 |
| NE to gather audit sample | | 25th November – 6th December 2024 |
| Remote audit of sample | | w/c 9th and 16th December |
| Post audit call, review and queries | | 19th December |
| Signed, final audit report submitted using the European Commission’s latest audit report template (one signed hard copy and one electronic copy (including signatures) in pdf format) | | w/c 20 January 2025 |

The above timetable may be subject to change, will be discussed and amended as appropriate at the inception meeting, and any changes will be notified as soon as they are known.

The output of the contract will be a Certificate on the Financial Statement of the LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES project, which will be produced in the Commission’s compulsory report format (see section 2.1.3 for more details).

Throughout the duration of the contract there will be regular Teams calls or emails, particularly once the project financial statements are submitted to the auditor, to discuss progress and/or any issues. The nature and frequency of this correspondence will be discussed further at the inception meeting.

**Contract Management**

This contract will be managed on behalf of the Authority by Rebecca Smith ([rebecca.l.smith@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.l.smith@naturalengland.org.uk)). The contract is led by Natural England (NE). Other Natural England staff are likely to be involved in the contract are listed below. It is also expected that the contractor will work with some members of Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Individual** | **Partner** |  |
| Rebecca Smith | NE | LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES Finance Officer |
| Fiona Tibbitt | NE | LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES Project Manager |
| Sarah McTweed and Judith Milne | NE | Externally Funded Projects Programme Office |
| Elle Padfield | Defra |  |
| Aimee Langstone and Robbie Ince | OCT |  |

Managing performance is important, the contractor is expected to maintain regular contact with the project officer to help ensure the contract milestones and output are met.

## 2.2 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. All invoices must also include the following reference: LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES (LIFE18 NAT/UK/000039) and a clear description of the service provided.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period 7 months to end no later than 31/01/25. 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.

*“Contractors shall make no financial investment in the project and, therefore, shall not benefit from any intellectual property rights arising from the project.”*

## 2.3 Evaluation methodology

We will award this contract in line with the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) as set out in the following award criteria:

Technical – 70%

Commercial – 30%

**2.3.1 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 | Expertise and experience | 2 Questions  Q1.1 (30% of technical score available)  Q1.2 (10% of technical score available) |
| Methodology | 1 Question  Q2 (30% of technical score available) |
| Project delivery and Quality Assurance | 2 Questions  Q3.1 (15% of technical score available)  Q3.2 (15% of technical score available) |
| Commercial | 30% | Whole life cost of the proposed Contract | Commercial Model | 1 Question  Q4 (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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Expertise and experience** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q1.1 Who will be involved in the project and what relevant experience, skills and knowledge do they bring?  Responses should not exceed 3 sides of A4, and use Arial font, size 11. In addition, please include **CVs**.  Please outline:   * the team's past contributions that best evidence their ability to carry out the proposed project. * examples of previous EU funded project audits | Your response should demonstrate the organisation and team has:  1. Experience of auditing European Union financed projects, ideally EU LIFE funded.  2. Relevant experience of undertaking similar work to a high standard. |
| Q1.2 How much time will each staff member spend on the project and on which aspects?  Responses should not exceed 1 side of A4, and use Arial font, size 11.  Inclusion of a provisional project plan and gantt chart is additional to this limit. | Referring to the tasks/activities outlined, your response should demonstrate:   1. Sufficient time allowed for each stage and task. 2. Staff with appropriate level of experience and knowledge involved in each stage and task. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Methodology** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q2. What methodology and approaches will you use to deliver the requirements of this project.  Responses should not exceed 4 sides of A4, and use Arial font, size 11. | Your response should:  1) Demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of the requirements.  2) Be a clear, practical, achievable, and cost-effective methodology to deliver these requirements.  3) provide a description of tasks and how you will approach them.  4) Outline how you intend to work with Natural England staff and those from other organisations.  5) Have information in sufficient detail to allow a full appraisal of the suitability of the approach to deliver for the project. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project delivery and quality assurance** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q3.1. How will you manage the project to ensure that you are able to ensure delivery on time and to the standard required by the Commission?  Responses should not exceed 4 sides of A4, and use Arial font, size 11. | Your response should demonstrate:   1. How the project will be managed, by whom, and what measures will ensure successful delivery on time and to budget. 2. Risks to project delivery and how you would mitigate these including contingency plans for unexpected absence or changes to key personnel to minimise impact on project delivery. |
| Q3.2. What quality assurance and data management processes do you have in place to ensure the final outputs are robust and meet the requirements of the Commission and that all data is handled appropriately?  Responses should not exceed 1 side of A4, and use Arial font, size 11. | Your response should briefly demonstrate:   1. The quality assurance processes and measures you will use to ensure quality outputs. 2. Your proposed data management processes (including secure data sharing site) to ensure all data is handled appropriately. |

**Commercial (30%)**

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

Suppliers are required to submit a total cost to provide the deliverables stated in the Specification of Requirements. In addition to this the Commercial Response template must be completed to provide a breakdown of the whole life costs against each deliverable used in the delivery of this requirement.

**2.3.2 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%

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.

**2.3.4 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 2)

● completed Acceptance of Terms and Conditions (Annex 3)

**2.3.5 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 Background information

The following is intended to help inform the scale and nature of the financial audit.

**A. Budget**

The project budget is currently split between the partners as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget heading** | **Project total** | **NE** | **MCS** | **OCT** | **RYA** | **TECF(PCC)** |
| Personnel | € 1,441,170 | € 817,532 | € 195,130 | € 270,793 | € 116,448 | € 41,267 |
| Travel & Subsistence | € 137,063 | € 82,717 | € 15,966 | € 20,595 | € 15,399 | € 2,386 |
| External Assistance | € 830,968 | € 587,431 | € 53,100 | € 101,068 | € 36,875 | € 52,494 |
| Infrastructure | € 207,737 | € 122,070 | € 0 | € 82,717 | € 0 | € 2,950 |
| Equipment | € 13,269 | € 944 | € 0 | € 12,325 | € 0 | € 0 |
| Consumables | € 47,666 | € 10,531 | € 1,180 | € 27,678 | € 8,260 | € 16 |
| Other | € 43,560 | € 25,919 | € 5,900 | € 0 | € 8,850 | € 2,891 |
| Overheads | € 190,499 | € 115,300 | € 18,989 | € 36,062 | € 13,008 | € 7,140 |
| **TOTAL** | **€ 2,911,930** | **€ 1,762,444** | **€ 290,265** | **€ 551,238** | **€ 198,840** | **€ 109,144** |

This is currently subject to change, and it is likely that the budgets for Natural England (NE), Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT) and Plymouth City Council (PCC) will increase slightly, whilst the budgets for Marine Conservation Society (MCS) and Royal Yachting Association (RYA) will decrease slightly.

**B. Reporting templates**

Natural England (as coordinating beneficiary) is responsible for reporting the technical and financial progress of the project to the Commission. All financial reporting needs to be provided using the Commission’s statement of expenditure template (and will be supplied to the auditor) and appropriate supporting documentation (see section C) for all expenditure needs to be retained.

As a 2018 project ReMEDIES is required to use the following LIFE 2014-2020 programme templates for reporting:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Template** | **Who will complete** |
| [Consolidated financial statement](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/document/download/55df9174-deb5-4bfc-af29-d4022dd5bcfd_en?filename=LifeFinancialReportingConsolidated20190424.xlsm) | Natural England |
| [Financial statement](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1b07e23b-81c2-4981-b67b-826883ccdca4_en?filename=Life_financial_reporting_2014-2020%20%20beneficiaries_V2012.xlsm) of the individual beneficiary | All the project partners |
| Certificate Durable goods for [Nature projects](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/document/download/571763bc-9335-4c08-8771-2a4282ad80d0_en?filename=LifeCertificateNatureProject.xlsx)\* | Natural England, Ocean Conservation Trust, and Plymouth City Council |

\* some of our durable goods have or will be transferred to individuals or organisations (e.g. Harbour Authorities) outside the project partnership. We have worked with LIFE to develop a slightly amended Certificate for Nature Projects template.

**C. Supporting documentation**

The supporting documentation (all held electronically) for the project includes, for example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Supporting documentation** | **NE** | **OCT** |
| Rail tickets and other travel and subsistence receipts and documentation | ~800 | ~150 |
| Receipts and invoices relating to low value equipment and consumable purchases | ~40 | ~275 |
| External Assistance, Infrastructure and Other costs invoices ranging in value, up to £23,000 | ~130 | ~270 |
| Procurement documents (for contracts of varying value, including very low value) | ~80 | ~300\* |
| Signed timesheets and monthly time recording reports | ~450 LIFE timesheets  63 monthly Orion time recording reports | ~150 LIFE or internal timesheets |
| Payroll data\*\* | 65 staff | ~ 13 staff |

*\* These are all direct award purchases, with the majority (~260) being very low value (e.g. lab consumables).*

*\*\* Personnel – this is the total number of staff that have worked on the project. We do not have that many staff working in any one year on the project.*

All this documentation is held electronically. In addition, some is held by SSCL or in hard copy at the NE Exeter Office or at the Ocean Conservation Trust Plymouth Office. See section 2.1.3 location for further information.

A full list of the documentation that needs to be inspected as part of the audit is included in the Commission’s audit guidance/template (see section 2.1.3 for further information and a link to the guidance).

# Annex 2 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 3 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 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**