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Request for Quotation

##

## Request for Quotation

**DESIGNING AND APPLYING A METHOD TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL LINKS BETWEEN OFFSHORE WIND ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVING GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS**

You are invited to submit a quotation for the requirement described in the specification below.

Please confirm, by email, receipt of these documents and whether you intend to submit a quote.

Your response should be returned to the following email address by: 1700 on the 25/11/2022

Email: melanie.parker@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: 25th November 2022

Time: 1700

Ensure you state the reference number and ‘Final Submission’ in the subject field to make it clear that it is your response.

**Contact Details and Timeline**

Mel Parker will be your contact for any questions linked to the content of the quote pack or the process. Please submit any questions by 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 | 07-Nov-2022 at 1700 GMT |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 18-Nov-2022 at 1700 GMT |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 25-Nov-2022 at 1700 GMT |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 05-Dec-2022 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 19-Dec-2022 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration  | 13-Mar-2023  |

### 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 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs acting as part of Natural England |
| “RFQ” | Means this Request for Quotation and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to suppliers |
| “Contract” | Means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier. |

### Conditions applying to the RFQ

You should examine your response to the RFQ and related documents ensuring it is complete prior to submitting your completed quotation.

Your quotation must contain sufficient information to enable the Authority to evaluate it fairly and effectively. You should ensure that you have prepared your quotation fully and accurately and that prices quoted are arithmetically correct for the units stated.

The supplier by submitting a quotation is deemed to accept the terms and conditions in the RFQ. Failure to comply with the instructions set out in the RTQ may result in the supplier’s exclusion from this procurement.

**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.

#### Mandatory Requirements

The RFQ includes mandatory requirements and, if you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated. All mandatory requirements are set out in Bravo.

#### Clarifications

The Authority reserves the right to discuss, confidentially, any aspect of your quotation with you prior to any award of Contract to clarify matters.

#### 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 in writing and may extend the deadline for receipt in order to give you a reasonable time in which to take the amendment into account.

#### Conditions of Contract

The terms and conditions attached [Condensed Terms and Conditions](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/914956/standard-condensed-terms.odt) will be included in any contract awarded as a result of this RFQ process. The Authority will not accept any material changes to these terms and conditions proposed by a supplier.

#### Specification

The Authority is Natural England. The Authority’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 about the Authority can be found at: [Natural England](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/)

1. **Background to the specific Natural England work area relevant to this purchase**

Natural England is proud of its provision of conservation advice for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the publicly available ‘[Advice on Operations](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/)’ which is a tried and tested source of information on potential impacts of marine activities on designated species and habitats. Our vision for achieving marine nature recovery requires that we also consider activities’ impacts beyond the scope of existing protection measures, to add to our current MPA conservation advice so that it includes the wider marine environment.

Under the UK Marine Strategy, a broad framework for assessing the state of the wider marine environment is set out across 15 Good Environmental Status (GES) descriptors. Natural England is exploring a major new project to link marine activities, through a standardised list of associated pressures, to their potential impact on the achievement of GES. This work will provide a focus for Natural England’s wider seas conservation advice, and support marine nature recovery. In addition, it will assist those carrying out licensable activities in the marine environment to demonstrate the contribution that their activity makes to achieving GES, as well as improving business certainty, and supporting better environmental outcomes.

Natural England foresees the end product being a standardised, nationally consistent platform to identify activity-relevant impacts on GES that need to be mitigated for, as well as opportunities to actively contribute to achievement of GES. In addition to being able to identify a proposal’s relevant impact on GES internally, our ultimate aim is to make this conservation advice for GES publicly available through an online, operator-focused interface, consistent with the quality information that is currently accessible through our Advice on Operations via [Designated Sites View](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/). This will allow project planners to identify potentially relevant GES descriptors and targets at an early stage in the process so that they can demonstrate how the implications of their project for hindering or aiding delivery of GES have been considered.

This ‘proof of concept’ pilot project is designed to test the value of the approach by focusing on a subset of activities and descriptors, i.e. those relevant to offshore wind operations.

1. **Requirement**

**Aim of the Proof-of-Concept pilot Project**

To demonstrate evidence-based, auditable, and transparent connections between offshore wind activities and the UKMS GES descriptors, targets and indicators. This pilot tool should be in place by the end of March 2023, ready to be trialled through Natural England’s strategic advice on offshore wind activities.

**Scope**

1. Develop an auditable, transparent, and repeatable method to demonstrate the relative relevance of specific GES descriptors, targets and indicators to pressures associated with offshore wind activities (Annex 1 and Annex 2).
2. Clearly state how the potential impact levels have been defined.
3. Present it in a user-friendly format, (ideally in Access, but Excel would be acceptable).
4. Summarise lessons learned through this pilot project, which could be applied as and when this work is scaled up to include other marine activities and descriptors once this Proof-of-Concept work has been completed satisfactorily.
5. Produce a PowerPoint summary, at the end of the project, setting out the work that has been completed and any recommendations for further development.
6. Deliver an electronic copy of all material, references, technical reports, spreadsheets and data undertaken and collected as part of the project.
7. Identify a suitable peer-reviewed journal for the subsequent submission of a draft paper (delivered as an output to a future project) setting out the methodology for Scope 1 using Natural England’s Offshore Windfarm Conservation Advice for GES advice as the case study.

**Preferred Methodology**

* Use available evidence and expert advice to complete a pre-provided Access database (or construct a matrix in Excel), showing relative relevance of each pressure to each Descriptor (at a target and indicator level).
* Present the filtered results in a format that is easy for a user to identify the nature, extent and scale of impact for each pressure associated with the proposed activity.

**Key Requirements**

* The methodology should be clear, auditable, logical and transparent.
* Evidence should be used to underpin decisions
* Potential risk of impact should be assessed as:
	+ Low, Moderate, High or No risk
	+ Each assessment should be underpinned by evidence where available, and expert consensus should be used where no evidence is available
	+ For each conclusion on the potential risk of impact a confidence score should be assigned. Confidence methodology should be evidence based, auditable and transparent.
* Potential risk of impact and pressure benchmarks should be reviewed by relevant experts / specialists. Applicants should outline the most appropriate means of ensuring expert appraisal of the assessments.
* Internal and external quality control of the assessments should be rigorous.
* All data and results should be entered into a MS Access database. An Excel spreadsheet would suffice if Access is not an option.
* All references should be entered into an Endnote library or at least stored in Excel.
* Where appropriate, without losing accuracy, groupings of targets / indicators may provide time and cost efficiencies. These should be investigated and justified.
* Applicants should be familiar with current GES targets, indicators and assessments prior to submitting a proposed method
1. **Outputs and Contract Management**

We estimate this contract will take 10-12 weeks to deliver.

The contract must be completed in full by 31st March 2023. Midway milestones have been suggested as per the following table:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Week 1 | Start up / clarification meeting between project officer and successful supplier. Agree approach including impact risk definition and assessment of confidence in conclusions |
| Weekly progress telecalls | Week 6  | Draft output due in digital format via email / electronic transfer |
| Week 8 | Comments on content and format from NE and selected others (e.g. a review board potentially consisting of JNCC, MMO, Defra, Cefas) incorporated into draft output |
| Week 10 | Final outputs due in digital format via email / electronic transfer, including supporting data and references |
| Week 11  | Wash up meeting including ppt presentation |
| Week 11 & 12 | Contingency for any unforeseen delays that arise |
| Week 12 | Contract to be completed by 31st March 2023. Sign off. |

With 12 weeks delivery time, to allow for contract completion and payment by Friday 31st March 2023, the latest possible start date for this project would be Mon 9th Jan 2023.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 12 weeks to end no later than 31/03/2023. 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 advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

### Sustainability

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

The successful contractor must provide a copy of their environmental policy and any environmental accreditation schemes which they have been awarded or are working towards.

### Supporting Documentation

In addition to your proposed method and detailed quality control approach, please provide evidence of the following:

* + Identification of risks associated with the proposal and show consideration as to how these will be mitigated
	+ A costed activity schedule as below
	+ VAT registration number
	+ Pen portraits / CVs of proposed key personnel
	+ Past Work where relevant
	+ Research Methodologies
	+ Environment Policies
	+ Relevant Licenses held
	+ Professional Indemnity Insurance
	+ Details of any subcontractors and how they will be managed, if applicable.
	+ Details and costs of additional info / data requirements and their impact if they are not available. Details of how data will be sourced and managed
	+ Details of tangible, specific benefits of what your organisation will bring to the project.
1. **Prices**

**Pricing Schedule**

Applicants should provide a pricing schedule in the format of the following table.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Number of days (or hours if more applicable)** | **Fixed price £ excluding VAT** |
| Literature / Evidence gathering |  |  |
| Literature / Evidence review |  |  |
| Production and completion of direct impact matrix incl. confidence in conclusions |  |  |
| Summary Report writing and PowerPoint preparation – lessons learned and recommendations |  |  |
| Identification of suitable Journal for potential publication of future peer-reviewed paper |  |  |
| Meetings (x3 virtual – draft discussion, initial clarification & final wash up) |  |  |
| Project management (including communications) |  |  |
| Travel & subsistence |  |  |
| Non-activity costs |  |  |
| VAT if applicable |  |  |
| Total |  |  |

Applicants should confirm that all quoted prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract

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

**Quotation Submission**

Quotations will be evaluated based on a 50% weighting for cost and a 50% weighting for quality. Specific quality criteria are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Weighting | To include: |
| Methodology proposed | 20% | * Outline method of how you propose to approach delivery of this contract
* Quality assurance process
* Risk identification and management
 |
| Communication of proposal | 15% | * Clear submission
* Well defined outputs
 |
| Relative experience in work area | 10% | * We are looking for a contractor with a good knowledge of marine ecology, offshore wind activities, and reliable access to relevant expertise and scientific literature
* CVs of staff delivering the contract, including those carrying out QA
* Evidence of previous relevant work
 |
| Sustainability | 5% | * Environment Policies and approach to delivering this work
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Justification** |
| For a score of hundred (100):   | Excellent - Response is completely relevant and excellent overall.  The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full. |
| For a score of seventy (70):   | Good - Response is relevant and good.  The response demonstrates a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled.  |
| For a score of fifty (50):   | Acceptable - Response is relevant and acceptable.  The response provides sufficient evidence to fulfil basic requirements. |
| For a score of twenty (20):   | Poor - Response is partially relevant and/or poor.  The response addresses some elements of the requirements but contains insufficient / limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled. |
| For a score of zero (0):   | Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate response.  Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement. |

**Contract Management**

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by Mel Parker, Senior Marine Adviser, Marine Strategy and Government Advice Team, Natural England.

All queries relating to this contract and specification must be submitted to Melanie Parker melanie.parker@naturalengland.org.uk and cc’d to marine.GES@naturalengland.org.uk. All queries will be recorded and the response to the question provided to all suppliers regardless of which supplier requested the information.

We will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award. 70% payment will be authorised at the end of week 8, on satisfactory incorporation of NE comments on the draft output. The final payment (30%) will be authorised once Natural England has received all agreed outputs.

### 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.

By submitting a quotation 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 contractor 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.

**Annex 1: List of GES Descriptors, Targets and Indicators for consideration in this pilot**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| D4 | Food Webs |
| D1 D6 | Benthic Habitats |
| D1 D4 | BirdsCetaceansSealsFish |
| D11  | Input of Anthropogenic Sound |
| D7 | Changes in Hydrographical Conditions |

This list appears in order of priorities for Natural England. If time or budget is restricted the work should be completed for the Descriptors at the top of the list, working down.

This does not mean that Natural England considers the remaining GES Descriptors to be irrelevant to offshore wind activities. These Descriptors have been prioritised to accommodate the limited time and resources available for this pilot work. It is Natural England’s intention to extend the work to include all Descriptors in the future when further resources are available.

**Annex 2: List of Pressures to be included**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| PressureCode | PressureName |
| B1 | Visual disturbance |
| B2 | Genetic modification & translocation of indigenous species |
| B3 | Introduction or spread of invasive non-indigenous species (INIS) |
| B4 | Introduction of microbial pathogens |
| B5 | Removal of target species |
| B6 | Removal of non-target species |
| D1 | Habitat structure changes - removal of substratum (extraction) |
| D2 | Penetration and/or disturbance of the substratum below the surface of the seabed, including abrasion |
| D3 | Changes in suspended solids (water clarity) |
| D4 | Smothering and siltation rate changes (Heavy) |
| D5 | Smothering and siltation rate changes (Light) |
| D6 | Abrasion/disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed |
| H1d | Temperature decrease |
| H1i | Temperature increase |
| H2d | Salinity decrease |
| H2i | Salinity increase |
| H3 | Water flow (tidal current) changes, including sediment transport considerations |
| H4 | Emergence regime changes, including tidal level change considerations |
| H5 | Wave exposure changes |
| L1 | Physical loss (to land or freshwater habitat) |
| L2sb | Physical change (to another seabed type) |
| L2sed | Physical change (to another sediment type) |
| O1 | Litter |
| O2 | Electromagnetic changes |
| O3 | Underwater noise changes |
| O4 | Introduction of light |
| O5 | Barrier to species movement |
| O6a | Collision ABOVE water with static or moving objects not naturally found in the marine environment (e.g., boats, machinery, and structures) |
| O6b | Collision BELOW water with static or moving objects not naturally found in the marine environment |
| O7 | Above water noise |
| O8 | Vibration |
| P1 | Transition elements & organo-metal (e.g. TBT) contamination |
| P2 | Hydrocarbon & PAH contamination |
| P3 | Synthetic compound contamination (incl. pesticides, antifoulants, pharmaceuticals) |
| P4 | Introduction of other substances (solid, liquid or gas) |
| P5 | Radionuclide contamination |
| P6 | Nutrient enrichment |
| P7 | Organic enrichment |
| P8 | Deoxygenation |