

www.gov.uk/naturalengland

**Request for Quotation**

**Community Science: Targeted sub-regional survey and monitoring coordination pilots**

**January 2024**

**Community Science: Targeted sub-regional survey and monitoring coordination pilots**

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:andy.jefferies@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: **1st March 2024**

Time: **1730**

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**

Andy Jefferies 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.

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| --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Date** |
| Date of issue of RFQ | 12th January 2024 |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 2nd February 2024 at 1700 GMT |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 1st March 2024 at 1730 GMT |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 15th March 2024 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 25th March 2024 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration  | 31st March 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):

|  |  |
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|  |  |
| “Authority” | means Natural England acting as part ofDepartment for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 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 Gov.uk website at: [[Standard goods and services terms and conditions (£10,000 to £50,000) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-terms-and-conditions-for-goods-and-services/standard-goods-and-services-terms-and-conditions-10000-to-50000)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-terms-and-conditions-for-goods-and-services/standard-goods-and-services-terms-and-conditions-10000-to-50000) 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 Authoritywith a publication threshold of £12,000inclusive of VAT.

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

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

**Disclaimers**

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

The Authority does not:

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

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

**Protection of Personal Data**

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

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

**General Data Protection Regulations 2018**

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

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

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

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)**

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

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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>.

## About Natural England

Natural England (NE) 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. 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.

## Project Background

## 2.1 Natural Capital and Ecosystems Assessment

The Natural Capital and Ecosystems Assessment (NCEA) programme will transform and innovate the way our evidence-base is captured, analysed, and brought together to ensure science meets the needs of policy/decision makers to embed a natural capital approach, allowing us to leave our environment in a better state than we found it.

The NCEA will provide a holistic, accurate and robust set of evidence and data for Defra, and other arm’s length bodies, to make informed policy decisions about the state of our natural capital assets in high profile policy areas and lead to better outcomes for the environment. It will also identify innovative and transformative ways of collecting, analysing, and distributing the data.

Better data and evidence are required so that government and society can:

* Understand our natural capital, how and why it is changing.
* Tackle pressures on the environment and the drivers of change.
* Take biodiversity and natural capital into account in decision making.
* Target action where it will be most effective.
* Evaluate policies and interventions to improve their effectiveness across Defra bodies.

 **2.2 NCEA Community Science workstream**

The NCEA Community Science workstream is a partnership of Defra, Natural England, JNCC, Environment Agency and Forest Research.

Community Science - often synonymous with the term Citizen Science, but with more inclusive connotations - (CS) is one of the cross-cutting tools we have for collecting data, alongside professional surveys, and earth observation. CS is already essential to environmental policy, forming the majority of current biodiversity monitoring in the UK. It complements and augments standard scientific approaches. Critically it has the potential to contribute even more significant amounts of useful data in places and of a richness that cannot be achieved by other means. The approach also provides an important means for members of the public to connect with nature and the environment, further developing and deepening their appreciation and understanding of its importance and benefit to us.

## Vision / Ambition

Defra group would like to help support and further enhance the role and impact of volunteer-based studies of nature and the environment (environmental community science) across England. Whilst there are many good examples of environmental community science practice and use, most are highly specialised with a narrow subject or geographic focus. We would like CS to become a more recognised, respected, and practical option for Defra group programmes to survey and monitor nature and its recovery, the environment and its improvement.

This contract forms part of a wider programme of work seeking to explore and support an inclusive community of national and local stakeholders and other interested parties across England to better coordinate survey efforts, standardise approaches, and engage public participation.

**Context and rationale**

Community science provides an important source of environmental evidence informing government policy, programmes, and projects. However, the full value, impact, and potential of community science for government, society, communities, and individuals, is limited by several factors, including:

* Insufficient information about or access to resources (methods, protocols, tools. projects and practice) that encourage and enable effective detection, measurement, record making, data sharing, integration and use.
* Insufficient information about and a lack of awareness of opportunities, capacity, and capability of projects that people can participate in.
* Insufficient investment in and capacity to engage, coordinate and support volunteers nationally at a sufficiently local scale.

Government investment in and use of CS data is already extensive and is well developed to suit specific purposes. However, public sector policy, programme and project use has focussed more on the acquisition and application of existing/historic data (already collected) than the design, support and collection of new/future data (survey effort). There is great potential to increase the collective breadth, reach, utility and value of its role in helping us survey and monitor nature and the environment. Currently;

* Community science presents a more involved method of data collection than contracted professionals or staff led survey and these approaches are considered exclusive of each other.
* Use of community science data is weighted towards surveillance (detecting general change and trends) as opposed to monitoring impacts (pressures and interventions as drivers of change);
* Data mobilisation issues that impede public sector and open reuse are not identified or addressed early enough in the pathway from collection to end use;
* Environmental community science investment, projects and initiatives remain disparate limiting their collective value, efficiency and overall benefit.

Wider consultation with national and local stakeholders has additionally enabled some key observations:

* There is a need for a well-resourced, coordinated CS network. This would increase communication, share and coordinate effort, increase resource and learning, improve data sharing, facilitate sharing of tools for community science and reduce duplication in effort and ‘reinventing the wheel’.
* Many organisations/individuals are short on time and resource.
* Community scientists need to feel empowered. CS projects need to be relatable for individuals and provide regular feedback on how their data is being used, why it is important and how the local area is benefiting from their work. It is particularly important to engage with more diverse organisations, or community groups including employing people from underrepresented groups to give opportunities and facilitate increasing the diversity of people engaged.
* Co-designing would help to empower the local community and understand local priorities.
* Good data quality, data recording platforms and data completeness are essential to national and local priorities. Many tools and methods already exist and would benefit from additional support.
* Funding is needed to resource the delivery of future CS networks.

Within this context, Natural England want to investigate approaches that help the wider community of established and potential stakeholders (CS sponsors and enablers) address these issues and opportunities at scale across England. We would like to:

* Explore the current and potential future role of community science and the opportunities to further develop and enhance the role of community science studies of nature and the environment across England.
* Promote cooperative monitoring to nurture closer community collaboration to better sponsor and enable the study of nature and the environment, improving and advancing understanding of the collective role of contracted, volunteered and technologically driven survey effort.
* Coordinate and combine the effort and resources of stakeholders (sponsors and enablers) at a more locally operational scale to share *why* we study nature and the environment, *what* elements we measure, *how* this is done and the extent to which *volunteers* are or can be beneficially involved.
* Explore the impact of introducing more capacity (*time, skill and funding*) for stakeholders to form partnerships at scale to engage, support and coordinate public participants in projects and initiatives that study nature and the environment.
* Share priorities, methods, tools, approaches, systems and especially our collective experience and lessons to better inform and evolve common guidance, standards, and resources.

## Project

This contract will help refine and test the hypothesis that investment in a series of foundational roles/functions at sub-national scale will help the community further coordinate, standardise, and engage public study of nature and the environment at scale. NE want to work with stakeholders to design and test this concept within four contrasting regions of England over this and next financial year (23/24 and 24/25).

A combination of learning from past programmes and more recent local and national consultation has informed this approach and our framing of this programme of pilots. We are interested in how this model of more localised support, together with the wider participatory framework we are developing, might increase the collective capability of existing stakeholders, engage and grow participation from wider society, business and industry.

Four contracts will be awarded to collaborative partnerships (or a single representative partner of such collaborations) to install staff and resources to trial and learn from the provision of the following three roles:

1. **Convene to Facilitate Collaboration** – to convene national and local stakeholders (sponsors, enablers, and beneficiaries) to explore shared interest, co-operation, co-development, and co-funding for the survey and monitoring of natural capital and ecosystems.
2. **Coordinate Methods & Effort** – to help partners and projects coordinate efforts to study natural capital and ecosystems, to efficiently develop, share and advance methods and tools in a mutually beneficial way and which help participants (volunteers and contractors alike) build confidence in the integrity and utility of the data they gather.
3. **Engage Participation** – to secure the time, skills and media needed to engage communities, attract, enrol, and nurture members of the public to proficiently study nature and the environment and benefit from doing so.

This investment in localised survey coordination (the focus of this contract) forms part of a wider, interconnected participatory framework comprising three pillars:

1. **Localised Survey Coordination** – geographically focused capacity, resourced and tested by these and two regional-scale pilots, to support Community Science (delivery of roles 1 and 3 and supporting role 2).
2. **Community Resource Library** – provision of a central repository for resources that enable and optimise the study of nature and the environment (delivery of role 2 and supporting roles 1 and 3).
3. **Thematic Survey Frameworks** - drawing together scientific understanding and community practice to establish a common narrative and approach to guide the study of ecosystems and natural capital, from why we need to, what elements to study and how this can be done reliably (supporting roles 1, 2 and 3).

Pilots will each be procured separately within the target regions on a contract basis. Their aim is to meaningfully (a) test the overall hypothesis, practical delivery models for Localised Survey Coordination, (b) test and support development of the Community Resource Library and (c) test and support development of Thematic Survey Frameworks. Collaborative partnerships may involve national and local public sector bodies and NGOs.

**Two pilots operating at a regional scale were initiated in November 2023. With this procurement, we aim to launch a further four which will test the model at a more focussed county scale. Together, all six form an integral part of the same overarching programme of exploration and development.**

The pilots will provide an important evidence base to further inform, refine and develop a sustainable co-funded model for future support for Community Science across England beyond the current NCEA lifecycle. Whole programme-life evaluation of the pilots as they develop is integral to this.

A national contract to design and support evaluation of all six pilots was let in July 2023 and is intended to run until and conclude by March 2025. The additional four pilots we are seeking to let now will each need to engage and work with the national evaluation contract.

The project is supported by all partners to the NCEA Community Science workstream, and a Strategic sub-board with representatives from these partners and wider policy and programme interests.

**Pilot description**

The focus of this work is on enabling and facilitating coordinated, purposeful studies of ecosystems and natural capital by volunteer members of the public, in ways that help inform decisions, actions and interventions as well as help us evaluate their success. They must also benefit the volunteer participants. Although access to and use of existing data is important, it is not the prime focus of this work. Acknowledging this early will help maintain focus and avoid distractions.

The four county-scale pilots will be procured under separate contracts within the [Natural England regions](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/898222/Natural-England-offices.pdf) of:

1. West Midlands
2. Norfolk & Suffolk

These target regions reflect the distribution of early selection and engagement work. There is no requirement for the four pilots to be equally distributed between these areas.

Further detail on Natural England boundaries can be found using the [Defra Magic mapping and information tool](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/).

Pilots will provide active resource within their operating areas – skills and experience through staffing and other support as appropriate - leveraging local and national stakeholder input and support progress towards achieving the following:

* Test the value of the three sub-national coordination roles:
	+ Convene and facilitate collaboration – activity that brings together local stakeholders to identify shared interests and priorities, and promote co-operation
	+ Coordinate methods and effort – promote shared resources, consult locally to adopt common approaches and contribute to their development
	+ Engage participation – support appropriate community engagement on behalf of local stakeholders, supported projects and initiatives
* Positive contribution to geographically specific focus areas for partnership development and delivery in relation to ecosystems and natural capital. For example, Landscape Scale Nature Recovery Projects (LNRPs), Local nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) or other stakeholder identified priorities.
* Support development of the Survey Resource Library through consultation, testing, feedback and case-study provision.
* Contribution to development of a sustainable model for future Localised Survey Coordination – engaging community input; assessing successes and limitations; contributing to programme evaluation and case-study provision.

The pilots’ operating phase will see progress towards the project aims during the year ‘24/’25. Defined evaluation activities will be carried out throughout reflecting the different project phases.

**Expected activities**

The following core activities will be expected of pilot delivery partners(hips)

Delivery

* Convene a Local Advisory Group to contribute to local pilot development and contribute to defining priorities: the why, what and by whom of Community science locally and how it integrates nationally.
* Identify local stakeholders, including for example, environmental NGOs; local government interests; locally operating ALBs (Natural England, Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation etc.); community bodies; health and wellbeing interests; Local Environmental Record Centres etc.
* Convene a Local Community Science Stakeholder Forum enabling representation from identified local stakeholders and contributing to defining priorities: the why, what and by whom of Community science locally and how it integrates nationally.
* Support the stakeholder forum in identifying local priorities for Community Science implementation: e.g., engagement/recruitment/training; project design and set-up support; specific projects or development areas etc.
* Identify and deliver locally prioritised support actions.

Programme development

* Contribute to NE facilitated monthly learning and sharing workshops with other pilot delivery partners(hips)
* Provide input as required to pilot programme evaluation. Independent evaluation is carried out on NE’s behalf by ICF. Specific requirements will be defined prior to contracting but likely to include information gathering from stakeholders and contribution to ICF-led structured workshops/interviews.
* Consultation activities with local stakeholders to support Community Resource Library and Thematic Survey Framework development.

Administrative

* Convene a contract inception meeting with NE programme staff within two weeks of contract confirmation
* Attend and contribute to NE facilitated pilot set-up workshop with other local pilot delivery partners(hips)
* Attend fortnightly progress meetings (online or face-to-face on site) with NE programme staff
* Quarterly and final reporting to a defined (light-touch) format (see final delivery dates below)
* Management of robust process e.g., GDPR
* Responsibility for contract, staffing and day-to-day legal matters

**Nature of contracted partner or partnerships**

There is no restriction on the type of organisation that may bid although it is anticipated that these may include national and local public sector bodies and NGOs. Given the broad extent of organisational skills and experience however we also welcome the formation of creative partnerships/consortia to deliver pilots.

Demonstratable experience in the following will be valuable:

* Community Science delivery in an environmental context
* Environmental survey, monitoring and recording locally/nationally
* Volunteer management
* Local/regional understanding, reach and relevance
* People engagement, especially hard-to-reach or under-represented groups and with a proactive approach to equality, diversity and inclusion
* Project management

In the event of a consortium approach, the contract will be held with a single named lead partner. Formal agreements between partners are not required at tender or contract signing stage but appropriate Memorandum of Agreement-type arrangements between partners will be expected to be in place within c.three months of contract signing to ensure partnership stability.

**Natural England Support**

Local pilots will be established under contracts, primarily to ensure that Natural England, on behalf of NCEA, can ensure the overall programme development needs are met. Natural England is committed to a partnership approach in supporting this development and will ensure the following are available to pilot delivery partners(hips)

* Access to a named officer responsible for the programme for any ongoing queries
* Close liaison and support for pilot development
* Facilitation of a learning and sharing networking between the four county-level partnerships and the two larger scale regional partnerships.
* Access to initial national and local stakeholder research carried out as part of the local pilot model development
* Access to background documentation and reports
* Provision of Community Resource Library materials
* Direct input by request and arrangement into Local Advisory Group and Local Stakeholder Forum meetings

**Project timescales**

**Table 1**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| NCEA (NE) activity |  |  | Pilot delivery partners(hip) |  |  | Pilot activity |  |  | Evaluation activity (ICF) |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **YEAR ‘24/’25** |
| **Q1** | **Q2** | **Q3** | **Q4** |
| Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar |
| Inception meeting and set-up workshop |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Local pilot operation phase (Pilots) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Natural England Support |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evaluation activities |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fortnightly progress meetings |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Monthly network workshops |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Advisory group operating |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Stakeholder forum operating |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Quarterly report |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Final report |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Community Resource consultation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Survey Framework consultation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Project Milestones**

**Table 2**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Milestone | Date |
| M1 | Contracts signed; initiation meetings held | 12/04/2024 |
| M2 | Infrastructure established: staff in place and up to speed; Advisory Group established; Stakeholder Group established; Partnership MoUs signed and copies to NE where appropriate; period evaluation actions complete; D1 quarterly report accepted | 28/06/2024 |
| M3 | Required development activities complete; period evaluation actions complete; D2 quarterly report accepted | 30/09/2024 |
| M4 | Required development activities complete; period evaluation actions complete; D4 quarterly report accepted | 30/12/2024 |
| M5 | Required development activities complete; period evaluation actions complete; D5 final report accepted | 14/03/2025 |

**Project Deliverables**

**Table 3**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Deliverable | Final delivery date (end) | Payment from | % of total |
| D1 | Quarterly report 1 | 28/06/2024 | 30/06/2024 | 20 |
| D2 | Quarterly report 2 | 25/09/2024 | 30/09/2024 | 20 |
| D3 | Quarterly report 3 | 30/12/2024 | 31/12/2024 | 20 |
| D4 | Final report | 12/03/2025 | 15/03/2024 | 40 |

Reports will follow a defined format reflecting different project phases in the project lifecycle.

**Key Performance Indicators**

**Table 4**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **KPI Title** | **Success Criteria** | **Reporting frequency** | **Delivery date** | **Reporting** |
| Deliverable – Project Progress Reports | Successful and timely competition of Project Progress reports  | Quarterly | As described in Table 3 Project deliverables and payments  | Quarterly report template |
| Outcome – Convene and explore shared interest, co-operation and co-development with national stakeholders.  | Stakeholder mapping complete.  | Quarterly | By 28/06/2024   | Quarterly report template   |
| Local Community Science Stakeholder Forum established.   |   |
| Local Advisory Group established.  |   |
| Outcome – Coordinate: to develop and share methods and tools which help members of the public study nature in a mutually beneficial way and which help users build confidence in the integrity and utility of the data they gather. | Shared interests and priorities between stakeholders identified and action agreed.  Action plan developed.  | Quarterly |  28/06/2024 | Quarterly report template |
| Action plan delivered and learning captured | Quarterly |  28/06/2025 | Quarterly report template |
| Outcome – Engage: secure the time, skills and media needed to engage communities, attract, enrol, and nurture members of the public to proficiently study nature and the environment and benefit from doing so.  | Engagement log complete | Monthly | Continuous | Quarterly report template |
| Attendance and contribution to NE facilitated monthly learning and sharing workshops with other pilot delivery partners(hips) | Meeting minutes | Monthly  | Continuous  | Quarterly report template |

## 5. Quotation Submission

## 5.1 Format

Tenders must be submitted in either MS Word or Adobe PDF file formats to the contact named in this RFQ, by the deadline provided.

The following must be included within the tender proposal.

* Project Schedule stating the timescales you will be able to execute and deliver the products specified above.
* Proposed Methodology (including data sources to be utilised)
* Details of your Capability and Expertise (including anonymised CVs of key personnel who will be directly involved with this contract, examples of relevant projects, and relevant peer reviewed work)

## 5.2 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. Invoices can be submitted quarterly after all associated deliverables are completed, received, and approved by Natural England.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of **one year** to end **31/03/2025.** 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 extension shall be agreed in writing in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

## 5.3 Contract Management

Natural England will nominate a Project Officer who will manage the project and serve as the principle point of contact from Natural England. They will be responsible for the day-to-day management of this contract and will coordinate regular meetings to review the work and ensure it meets the projects aims and objectives. As outlined above, meetings will be incorporated into the programme of works to discuss progress and facilitate feedback provision. Meetings will be organised by the successful Tenderer.

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by Andy Jefferies

Email: andy.jefferies@naturalengland.org.uk

The contractor will be expected to appoint a Project Manager who will act as the principle point of contact and will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the project. The contractor will be required to regularly update the Natural England Project Officer on project progress via regular progress meetings (held on MS Teams) arranged by the contractor, and when there are any significant issues.

Contact by email and phone will be expected from the contractor to update NE project manager on project schedules, plans and any issues that may arise.

## 5.4 Evaluation Methodology

Tenders will be disqualified if they do not meet the following requirements.

* Delivery prior to deadline
* Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions Provided
* Agreement to the Protection of Personal Data
* Provision of Environmental and Quality Assurance

Please ensure you provide agreement / sufficient evidence within your proposal for each of these.

We will award this contract in line with the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) as set out in the following award criteria table. Please ensure you provide sufficient evidence within your proposal to answer each of these comprehensively.

Representatives of any of the NCEA Community Science partners – Defra, Natural England, JNCC, Environment Agency, Forest research – with technical expertise relevant to the tender requirements may take part in evaluation of the technical responses to the tender.

### 5.4.1 Evaluation criteria

Evaluation weightings are 70% technical and 30% commercial, the winning tenderer will be the highest scoring combined score.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Stage 3**   | **Section Reference**  | **Evaluation Criteria**  | **Question Scoring/Weighting (%)**  |
| Evaluation Stage: Technical   | This stage will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out below.     | Scored (70%)          |
| Tenderers must achieve a minimum Descriptor of 50 (Moderate) for Technical Criteria E01-E05. Tenderers who fail to achieve the stated Technical Thresholds will not proceed to the Commercial evaluation.    |
| **E01**  | **Methodology**  | Scored (19%)  |
| Please provide a detailed methodology, describing the approach you will follow in order to deliver the objectives and outputs detailed in the specification.  Please upload a document with the filename: ‘E01 Your Company Name’ to the additional attachments area in the technical evaluation response envelope. Your response must not exceed a maximum of 6 sides of A4, Arial font size 12. Links to other document will not be considered as part of your response e.g., links to published documents online, etc.    |
| **E02**  | **Collaborative Working**  | Scored (19%)  |
| Please set out how you will work collaboratively with stakeholders to deliver the objectives and outputs detailed in the specification.  Your response should include evidence of existing relationships with some local stakeholders, identification of additional stakeholders who will be engaged in the future as part of this project and set out your plan to continue engagement throughout the life of the project. Your response could include a stakeholder map. Your response could include examples of previous experience working collaboratively with local stakeholders, how you engaged with stakeholders, secured buy-in and support and what the outcomes of the engagement were. **Please upload a document with the filename: ‘E02 Your Company Name’ to the additional attachments area in the technical evaluation response envelope. Your response must not exceed a maximum of 6 sides of A4, Arial font size 12. In addition to a stakeholder map if included. Links to other document will not be considered as part of your response e.g., links to published documents online, etc.**   |
| **E03**  | **Project Management**  | Scored (14%)  |
| Please set out your project management arrangements appropriate to the scale and duration of the project. Please include any proposed consortium or sub-contracting arrangements. Please provide a detailed project plan with resource allocation for each task, including Gantt chart.  Please provide a summary of all the risks you have identified that would impact the project, including how you intend to manage these risks and mitigate the impact on the project.  **Please upload a document with the filename: ‘E03 Your Company Name’ to the additional attachments area in the technical evaluation response envelope. Your response must not exceed a maximum of 4 sides of A4, Arial font size 12. Links to other document will not be considered as part of your response e.g., links to published documents online, etc.**  |
| **E04**  | **Staff Resources**  | Scored (8%)  |
| Please provide an outline of your proposed staff resourcing for the project, including plans for availability for the duration of the project and your contingency plan to deal with staff absences.   Please provide 1 page pen profiles of the staff you anticipate working on the project if known at this stage. Pen profiles should demonstrate your team member’s expertise and previous experience relevant to the tender requirements. **Please upload a document with the filename: ‘E04 Your Company Name’ to the additional attachments area in the technical evaluation response envelope. Your response must not exceed a maximum of 3 sides of A4, Arial font size 12. In addition to 1 pen profile per personnel allocated to the project. Links to other document will not be considered as part of your response e.g., links to published documents online, etc.**   |
| **E05**  | **Sustainability**  | Scored (10%)  |
| 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.  Describe your organisations approach to sustainability and how this will be managed and adopted throughout the project. The successful contractor is likely to be able to provide a copy of their environmental policy and any environmental accreditation schemes such as ISO 14001 or EMAS which they have been awarded or are working towards.  **Please upload a document with the filename: ‘E05 Your Company Name’ to the additional attachments area in the technical evaluation response envelope. Your response must not exceed a maximum of 3 sides of A4, Arial font size 12. In addition to copies of the organisations environmental policy and any accreditation schemes. Links to other document will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online, etc.**   |
| **Evaluation Stage 4**  | **Section Reference**  | **Evaluation Criteria**  | **Question Scoring/Weighting (%)**  |
| Evaluation Stage: Commercial - Pricing Schedule  | Prices will be evaluated in accordance with criteria set out below  | Scored (30%)  |

**Technical (60%)**

Technical evaluations will be based on responses to specific questions covering key criteria which are outlined below. Scores for questions will be based on the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description | Score  | Definition |
| Very good  | 100 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. There are no weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority complete confidence that all the requirements will be met to a high standard.  |
| Good | 70 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains minor weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that all the requirements will be met to a good standard.  |
| Moderate | 50 | Addresses most of the requirements with most of the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains moderate weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that most of the requirements will be met to a suitable standard.  |
| Weak  | 20 | Substantially addresses the requirements but not all and provides supporting information that is of limited or no relevance or a methodology containing significant weaknesses and therefore raises concerns for the Authority that the requirements may not all be met. |
| Unacceptable | 0 | No response or provides a response that gives the Authority no confidence that the requirement will be met.  |

**Commercial (40%)**

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

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

### 5.4.2 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%]** (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.

**5.4.3 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)

**5.4.4 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.

**Attachment 1: Commercial Response**

**Tenderer Agreement**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item**  | **Agreed Y/N**  |
| Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions Provided  |   |
| Agreement to the Protection of Personal Data   |   |
| Provision of Environmental and Quality Assurance Information  |   |

**Technical Proposal Checklist – Quality Weighting 60%**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item**  | **Provided in Tender Submission Y/N**  |
| 1. Proposed Schedule   |   |
| 2. Proposed Method Statement  |   |
| 3. Details of your Capability and Expertise   |   |

**Commercial Pricing Schedule – Price Weighting 40%**

Please note, prices must be submitted excluding VAT.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item**  | **Staff Grade / day rate**  | **Number of days**  | **Total £GBP**  |
| Project Virtual Meetings and Presentation  |   |   |   |
| Data Collection and Analysis  |   |   |   |
| Report Production  |   |   |   |
| Project Management  |   |   |   |
| Other (*if required please detail)*  |   |   |   |
| **Total (excluding VAT)**  |   |   |   |
| **VAT**  |   |   |   |
| **TOTAL (including VAT)**  |   |   |   |

**Submission Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tenderer Organisation Name  |    |
| Tenderer Contact Name  |    |
| Address  |    |
| Email  |    |
| Telephone  |    |
| Signature  |    |
| Date  |    |

**Annex 1: Mandatory Requirements**

**Part 1 Potential Supplier Information**

Please answer the following self-declaration questions in full and include this Annex in your quotation response.

**Part 1.1 Potential Supplier Information:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 1.1(a) | Full name of the potential supplier submitting the information |  |
| 1.1(b)  | Registered office address (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(c) | Company registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(d) | Charity registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(e) | Head office DUNS number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(f) | Registered VAT number  |  |
| 1.1(g) | Are you a Small, Medium or Micro Enterprise (SME)? | (Yes / No) |

Note: See EU definition of SME <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en>

**Part 1.2 Contact details and declaration**

By submitting a quotation to this RFQ I declare that to the best of my knowledge the answers submitted, and information contained in this document are correct and accurate.

I declare that, upon request and without delay you will provide the certificates or documentary evidence referred to in this document.

I understand that the information will be used in the selection process to assess my organisation’s suitability to be invited to participate further in this procurement.

I understand that the authority may reject this submission in its entirety if there is a failure to answer all the relevant questions fully, or if false/misleading information or content is provided in any section.

I am aware of the consequences of serious misrepresentation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no.  | Question | Response |
| 1.2(a) | Contact name |  |
| 1.2(b) | Name of organisation |  |
| 1.2(c) | Role in organisation |  |
| 1.2(d) | Phone number |  |
| 1.2(e) | E-mail address  |  |
| 1.2(f) | Postal address |  |
| 1.2(g) | Signature (electronic is acceptable) |  |
| 1.2(h) | Date |  |

**Part 2 Exclusion Grounds**

**Part 2.1 Grounds for mandatory exclusion**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no.  | Question | Response |
| 2.1(a) | Please indicate if, within the past five years you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation been convicted anywhere in the world of any of the offences within the summary below. |
|  | Participation in a criminal organisation.  | (Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Corruption.  | ((Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Fraud.  | (Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities | (Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Money laundering or terrorist financing | (Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings | (Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
| 2.1(b) | If you have answered yes to question 2.1(a), please provide further details.Date of conviction, specify which of the grounds listed the conviction was for, and the reasons for conviction.Identity of who has been convicted.If the relevant documentation is available electronically, please provide the web address, issuing authority, precise reference of the documents. |  |
| 2.1 (c) | If you have answered Yes to any of the points above have measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (i.e., Self-Cleaning) | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(d) | Has it been established, for your organisation by a judicial or administrative decision having final and binding effect in accordance with the legal provisions of any part of the United Kingdom or the legal provisions of the country in which the organisation is established (if outside the UK), that the organisation is in breach of obligations related to the payment of tax or social security contributions? | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(e) | If you have answered yes to question 2.3(a), please provide further details. Please also confirm you have paid or have entered into a binding arrangement with a view to paying, the outstanding sum including where applicable any accrued interest and/or fines. |  |

**Part 2.2 Grounds for discretionary exclusion**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no.  | Question | Response |
| 2.2(a) | The detailed grounds for discretionary exclusion of an organisation are set out on this [webpage](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551130/List_of_Mandatory_and_Discretionary_Exclusions.pdf), which should be referred to before completing these questions. Please indicate if, within the past three years, anywhere in the world any of the following situations have applied to you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation |
| 2.2(b) | Breach of environmental obligations?  | (Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(c) | Breach of social obligations?  | (Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(d) | Breach of labour law obligations?  | (Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(e) | Shown significant or persistent deficiencies in the performance of a substantive requirement under a prior public contract, a prior contract with a contracting entity, or a prior concession contract, which led to early termination of that prior contract, damages or other comparable sanctions? | (Yes / No)If yes, please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2 (f) | If you have answered Yes to any of the above, explain what measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (Self-Cleaning) |  |

**Attachment 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 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_