Norfolk and Suffolk Wetland Investigation questions and answers:

* The budget listed against each RFQ is £10,000 to £49,999, which is relatively broad, especially when considering all six projects together. Would it be possible for Natural England to provide a more precise estimated spend for each piece of work, please?
  + Natural England, as standard practice, does not disclose exact budget amounts. Suppliers are expected to provide an accurate quote based on the information provided in the RFQ. We can confirm that the estimated value of each contract is £10,000 to £49,999.
* Could you also please confirm if Natural England intends to run all six projects together as a larger piece of work? Or will these remain separate with separate suppliers potentially being awarded individual groups?
  + Each group will remain separate with separate suppliers potentially being awarded individual groups.
* We also note that the intention is for payment to be made upon completion of the works: *Natural England should be invoiced once the final report, maps and data have been supplied to and signed off by Natural England at the end of the project.* Given the timescales of these projects, we would appreciate if Natural England would consider allowing for monthly invoicing, with payment being made for work completed up to that point. We are open to further discussion on this.
  + We would prefer single payment on completion however we could consider payments on completion of Tasks 3,4 and 6 as described in the Summary of outputs Table in Section 3 of the RFQ
* Q4 in the spec on page 20 doesn’t have complete text – ‘Provide evidence that you pursue sustainability in your operations, thereby ensuring Natural England is not contracting with a supplier whose…’ – do you know what it should say?
  + “…whose operational outputs run contrary to its objectives.”
* Table 2 in the terms of reference (page 14) refers to previous studies undertaken at each of the SSSI’s including condition monitoring.   A number of the site appear not to have any previous monitoring and so the botanical survey will essentially be from scratch.  This can obviously be taken account of in the costs for the study.   However, it would be helpful to have access to the reports for those surveys that have been done at this stage in order to help refine time allocations.
  + There will be some data available for all sites, that is currently being collated in time for Task 2 in the Summary of Outputs Table. It can be assumed that this will be limited and partial for sites with no significant data indicated in Table 2.
* Section 2b refers to ‘Representative quadrats of more uniform widespread wetland habitats plus detailed point/quadrats in key locations.’  Do the sites in which condition surveys have previously been undertaken have established quadrat locations?
  + Some will have previous quadrats which may be beneficial to repeat. Meeting the project aims and outputs is key however, rather than simply repeating past quadrat surveys.
* Also, are quadrats required in the rarer and mosaic habitats, or just the widespread ones?
  + The methodologies can be defined by the contractor but must be fit to achieve the outputs and project aims. See Work required and outputs 2b: “Representative quadrats of more uniform widespread wetland habitats plus detailed point/quadrats in key locations.”
* Will access to the sites be arranged by NE?
  + We will contact site owners/manager for access in principle and permission to share contact details as appropriate, but the contractor will need to make their specific access arrangements thereafter.
* Are you able to give any indication of budget?
  + Natural England, as standard practice, does not disclose exact budget amounts. Suppliers are expected to provide an accurate quote based on the information provided in the RFQ. We can confirm that the estimated value of this contract is £10,000 to £49,999.
* Would you consider extending the submission deadline for the tender please, ideally to the 6th Oct?
  + No, I’m afraid not. The process and timeline is established with fixed points for assessment of tenders.
* The RFQ suggests we should submit each question separately. Currently they are responded to individually but within a singly document. Do you want each question separated out, put into its own document and submitted individually?
  + Each question answered individually but in a single document
* I understood that the 10-50K envelope was net of VAT.
  + Yes, that is correct
* The RFQ asks us to include VAT but the Commercial Response asks us to submit costs without VAT. Is this what NE expect?
  + Complete the template excluding VAT as stated but please provide a clear statement as to the VAT that will be charged.