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Request for Quotation

Evaluation of Natural England’s Nature Recovery Network Seedcorn Projects

# December 2022

# Request for Quotation

### Evaluation of the Natural England’s Nature Recovery Network Seedcorn projects.

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:

Email: [karen.robinson@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:karen.robinson@naturalengland.org.uk)

Date: Friday 13th January 2023

Time: 12.00pm

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

## Contact Details and Timeline

Karen Robinson 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 | 20th December 2022 |
| Deadline for clarification questions | 6th January 2023 |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 13th January 2023 |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 17th January 2023 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | By 1st February 2023 |
| Intended Delivery Date | 31st March 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):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Words/Expression | Meaning |
| “Authority” | Means the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs acting as part of Natural England. |
| “Contract” | Means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier |
| “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 quotation 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 [are available online](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/914956/standard-condensed-terms.odt) and 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

Natural England (NE) is the Government’s advisor on the natural environment. It provides practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England’s natural wealth for the benefit of everyone. Natural England’s 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.

Further information about the Authority can be found at: [Natural England](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england).

Full details of the contract specification are included as Annex 1 of this RFQ.

It is anticipated that this contract will 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 commending and may be subject to further competition.

## Prices

Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, inclusive of VAT. Prices must be submitted in an Excel spreadsheet. Bidders should note that as a guide the anticipated budget is £20,000 - £25,000 inclusive of VAT. This should be used as a guide to give an indication of the depth and breadth of the study and the resources required to complete the work.

Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period.

## Quotation Submission

Completed submissions should include the following items:

* evidence that you meet the quality criteria set out in the specification;
* your proposed pricing structure (to include name of staff, grade, day rate and total number of days allocated to each task and deliverable) ;
* your proposed workplan for the project

Submissions will be reviewed and then evaluated as set out below:

* each criteria will be given a score from 0 to 100;
* the criteria scores will be weighted to create a final submission score;
* all of the final submission scores will be ranked;
* the field date will be confirmed;
* the agency with the highest weighted score for the chosen field date will be awarded the contract - subject to the terms and conditions within the RFQ.

If the start date of the contract should substantially change, then agencies will be asked for their availability in the order of ranked final submission score. We will award this contract in line with the most economically advantageous tender. Suppliers will be scored on price and quality:

* Price – 50%
* Quality – 50%

A detailed breakdown of how the quality criteria will be assessed is included in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question Number** | **Question** | **Maximum Available Score** | **Weighting %** | **Maximum length** |
| E01 | **Understanding of Natural England’s requirement** | 100 | 15% | 500 words |
| Outline your understanding of Natural England requirements in this specification. |
|  |
| E02 | Outline the **approaches** you will use to deliver this contract, giving justification for the methods proposed if they differ from those detailed in the specification below.  Please include a provisional project plan, including details of how the project will meet the key deliverables.  We would also ask that you allocate the number of days to the delivery of each task and deliverable.  Include a short assessment of risks and dependencies affecting the project including input required from Natural England, and your proposals for how these will be managed and mitigated. | 100 | 45% | 1000 words |
| E03 | **Experience of the project team or consultant** | 100 | 40% | 800 words (N.B. CVs will be excluded from this word count) |
| Provide details of the project team and the key personnel, with their seniority, who will be involved in delivering the project. You should demonstrate the team’s skills and experience in:   * Reviewing and carrying out impact evaluation of small projects. * Carrying out surveys and interviewing. * Analysis of qualitative data and report writing. * delivering contracts for public sector clients, particularly contracts with an environmental focus.   Please indicate a CV and the number of days each member of the team has allocated on this project as well as who will lead on each task. |
| In addition, please provide two (2) examples of your current or previous work within government departments, wider public sector, or equivalent that are similar in subject matter or scope to this requirement. |
|  |
| **Total** |  |  | **100%** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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 Karen Robinson ([karen.robinson@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:karen.robinson@naturalengland.org.uk)).

The outputs of the contract are included in the specification below (Annex 1). Fortnightly check-ins with the Project Officer via a Teams call or email, to discuss progress and/or any issues, will be required from late January 2023 onwards, for the duration of the contract.

The project outputs are to be produced in a written final report in Word and pdf formats, as well as any accompanying visuals/graphics, spreadsheets and models. All reports will be clearly presented, concise, written in plain English with a target audience of an educated lay person. Reports will be supplied by email in Microsoft Word 97-2003 and pdf formats.

It is NE’s expectation that all final project reports are published, NE however reserves the right to determine if and how results should be published.

We will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award.

Payment can be made in two instalments, with 25% to be invoiced upon receipt of the inception note, and the remaining 75% to be invoiced upon agreement of the final deliverables.

## 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: TENDER SPECIFICATION

## Introduction

Natural England’s Science, Evidence & Evaluation Strategy (2020-25) sets out how we will move from being an evidence-based to an evidence-led organisation. This means as an organisation we will:

* Use science and evidence to identify strategic opportunities, priorities, and innovation, and act on them.
* Ensure that the best available evidence is central to all our decision making, delivery, advice and risk assessment.
* Be a learning organisation that evaluates the outcomes of our actions; and
* Be an organisation that invests in science, evidence and evaluation capability.

To achieve nature’s recovery, we need to ensure that resources are targeted and used to implement actions that are most likely to work. This requires us to:

* Evaluate our interventions as a matter of routine to understand what ‘good’ looks like, what works, unintended consequences, and ensure lessons learned are applied.
* Embed evaluation from the start of the programmes and projects, thereby improving their focus and likelihood of success.

The focus of this contract is to evaluate the effectiveness of NE’s Seedcorn projects and to develop a methodology for in-house monitoring and evaluation of future Seedcorn projects.

## Background to the Nature Recovery Network Seedcorn projects

The [Nature Recovery Network](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network) (NRN) is a key element of the Government’s ambition to deliver a better Environment within a generation, as set out in the [25 Year Environment Plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan) (25YEP). It seeks to deliver a national network of sites that benefit wildlife and people, expanding, improving and connecting wildlife-rich places across our towns, cities and countryside.

We want to create a network that helps improve our landscape’s resilience to climate change, provides natural solutions to reduce carbon and manage flood risk, and sustain vital ecosystems that support improved soil, clean water and clean air.

NE has [12 Area Teams](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-office-locations) each of which employ a Nature Recovery Network Senior Advisor whose role is to develop local partnerships and projects to drive forward the NRN in their area. The NRN priorities for each Area Team are set out in their Local Nature Recovery Plan.

The concept of Seedcorn projects arose from the belief that small amounts of money (<£25,000) could be used to help pave the way for bigger more successful nature recovery projects either by funding research studies, pump priming or perhaps supporting the development of new partnerships. Area Team NRN Senior Advisors and partner organisations are encouraged to think innovatively about how small ‘Seedcorn’ projects could provide them with solid foundations against which to deliver their local nature recovery plans.

In 2019/20 we funded eight ‘frontrunner’ projects to test our Seedcorn concept. In 2020/21 this increased to over 90 and in 2021/22 135. In 22/23 we are planning to support over 80 projects.

The projects deliver against an agreed set of guiding principles:

* Strategically support the expansion, connectivity, amount and quality of nature outside of protected sites but linking with protected sites. This will include priority habitats, linking up with green spaces, species recovery etc.
* Strategically support people's experience of nature e.g reducing barriers to accessing wild places.
* Support planning for the above: this may include connecting People with Nature – to ensure people are involved in setting the nature recovery agenda, that they feel a sense of ownership of nature recovery.
* Unblock blockages / help move the contribution to NRN forward significantly
* Plugging strategically important gaps
* Providing leverage for future funding
* Supporting new, strategic partnerships
* Working across NE Area Team boundaries
* Linking to species recovery and improvement in site condition

## Specification of Requirements

This section sets out the contract requirements. Suppliers must explain how they will deliver the required outputs 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 below under Quotation Submission.

**The key deliverables for this contract will be:**

1. *A report that reviews the impact and learning from Seedcorn projects*
2. *Recommendations on how future Seedcorn projects could be monitored and evaluated in-house.*

**Deliverable 1**

It is NE’s understanding that Seedcorn projects are useful for helping pave the way to more effective local nature recovery projects by providing them with the evidence or support needed to develop a more robust project with sound foundations. NE would like to test this assumption by commissioning a review as to the outcomes of the Seedcorn projects to provide evidence and clarity of if, where and how Seedcorn projects are supporting local nature recovery projects.

NE would like to commission a report that provides answers to the questions below. This report will be used to identify if changes are needed either to the guiding principles (listed above) or to the focus we give them.

NE would like answers to the following questions….

1. To what extent is Seedcorn funding providing a solid foundation or springboard for future nature recovery projects in a local area?
2. Are there project types that are more successful than others? If so, what are they and why is this?
3. Are there gaps in the types of Seedcorn projects coming forward (against the principles listed above) and if so, why is this?
4. To what extent have the seedcorn projects been used to lever in and secure commitments for further future national NRN partnership investment or local partners input into nature recovery projects? How have they been used? If not, why not?
5. How have the projects helped to deliver against the NRN Seedcorn principles relating to public engagement and attracting new partners?
6. Is Seedcorn viewed as an important element in laying foundations for long term, resilient projects, which can subsequently attract funding from both the public and private sector?

All available data on Seedcorn projects past and present will be shared with the successful contractor.

**Deliverable 2**

Data on all projects that receive Seedcorn funding is gathered centrally on an excel spreadsheet and includes the following information: funding, location, partners, anticipated outcomes, objectives, related principle and success (a snippet of the spreadsheet – without funding data - can be found at the bottom of this document). Currently, however, there isn’t a process or methodology for systematically gathering and analysing data on what these projects have led to, how they have delivered against their outcomes, lessons learned and other more qualitative information. Using knowledge gathered from producing deliverable 1, recommendations are sought as to what data might need to be captured and how this could be done to allow for annual internal monitoring and evaluation of Seedcorn projects going forward. Systems currently used by NE include Power BI and Qualtrics.

**Methods**

We anticipate that the following activities will be needed to deliver the contract:

* An **inception meeting** within the first 2 weeks, to agree objectives and scope of the work, with members of the project steering group.
* Following the inception meeting a **Project Plan** outlining activities, milestones and timelines.
* **Data gathering**
  + an initial desk-based review of all seedcorn projects (excel spreadsheets containing the information will be forwarded on the contract being awarded).
  + Following the desk-based review, surveys and/or interviews with NRN Senior Advisors (12) and other key members of staff from the central team (4). Interviews may also be sought with key local project partners. Interviews can be held online.
* Regular **updates** to the project manager related to progress either by telephone or email.
* Produce a **draft** report summarising the findings and recommendations on methodology for future evaluation.
* Provide a **final report** taking into account feedback from the steering group together with a **powerpoint presentation** that can be used by NE staff to communicate the results of the evaluation.

The above are our suggestions for how we feel the objectives of the contract could be met, however, we welcome contractors proposing additional/alternative methods.

**Budget**

The budget range for this contract is £20,000 - £25,000 inc. VAT. Proposals in excess of the maximum will not be considered.

**Timetable and Milestones**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Milestone** | **Detail** | **Date** |
| Deadline for receipt of tenders |  | 13th January 2023 |
| Contract awarded |  | 17th January 2023 |
| Project inception meeting and agreement of methodology | Meeting to discuss the proposed approach to the project.  The bidder should confirm that there will be availability to attend a project inception meeting during the week highlighted in the next column. | 18th – 25th January 2023 |
| Project Plan | Following the project inception meeting a brief project plan is required outlining activities, milestones and timelines. | 30th January 2023 |
| Commencement of works |  | Within 1 week1 of the inception meeting  By 1st February 2023 |
| **Deliverable 1** | Report on impact of Seedcorn projects   * Draft * Final | 20th March 2023  31st March 2023 |
| **Deliverable 2** | Recommendation of future Seedcorn monitoring and evaluation methodology. | 31st March 2023 |

