



## **Request for Quotation**

***Statistician to investigate scale and drivers of shellfish mortality in The Wash***

**10<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

# Request for Quotation

## ***Statistician to investigate scale and drivers of shellfish mortality in The Wash***

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 addresses by:

Email:

[Philippa.mountjoy@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Philippa.mountjoy@naturalengland.org.uk)

[Lauren.Ross@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Lauren.Ross@naturalengland.org.uk)

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Time: 17:30

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**

**Pip Mountjoy and Lauren Ross** will be your contacts for any questions linked to the content of the quote or the process. Please submit any clarification questions via email and note that, unless commercially sensitive, both the question and the response will be circulated to all tenderers.

Action	Date
Date of issue of RFQ	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Deadline for clarification questions	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Deadline for receipt of Quotation	15 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Intended date of Contract Award	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2024
Intended Contract Start Date	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2024
Intended Delivery Date/ Contract Duration	31 <sup>st</sup> 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):

“Authority”	means <b>Natural England</b> 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 [Natural England Website](#)

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 Authority** with a publication threshold of **£12,000** inclusive of VAT.

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

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

## **Disclaimers**

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

The Authority does not:

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

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

## **Protection of Personal Data**

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

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

- You must ensure that all the personal data that we disclose to you or you collect on our behalf under this agreement are kept confidential.
- You must take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees who have access to personal data.
- Only employees who may be required to assist in meeting the obligations under this agreement may have access to the personal data.
- Any disclosure of personal data must be made in confidence and extend only so far as that which is specifically necessary for the purposes of this agreement.
- You must ensure that there are appropriate security measures in place to safeguard against any unauthorised access or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage or disclosure of the personal data.

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

## **General Data Protection Regulations 2018**

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

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

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

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

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

Suppliers are expected to;

- support Defra group to achieve its Public Sector Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and to support delivery of [Defra group's Equality & Diversity Strategy](#).
- meet the standards set out in the [Government's Supplier Code of Conduct](#)
- work with Defra group to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion impacts are addressed (positive and negative) in the goods, services and works we procure, barriers are removed and opportunities realised.

## **Sustainable Procurement**

Addressing global sustainability impacts and realising additional community benefits within commercial activity is core to Defra group's approach, working with its supply chain is key to achieving sustainable outcomes. In addition to supporting Defra group to meet its outcomes we look to understand and reduce negative sustainability impacts associated with our commercial activity and realise benefits.

The Client encourages its suppliers to share these values, work to address negative impacts and realise opportunities, measure performance and success.

Suppliers are expected to have an understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals, the interconnections between them and the relevance to the Goods, Services and works procured on the Client's behalf.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

The concept of a conflict of interest includes but is not limited to any situation where an Involved Person or Relevant Body has directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure and/or affect the integrity of the contract award.

We expect suppliers to mitigate appropriately against any real or perceived conflict of interest through their work with government. A supplier with a position of influence gained through a contract should not use that position to unfairly disadvantage any other supplier or reduce the potential for future competition

Where the supplier is aware of any circumstances giving rise to a conflict of interest or has any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise you should inform the Authority of this as soon as possible (whether before or after they have submitted a quotation). Tenderers should remain alert to the possibility of conflicts of interest arising at all stages of the procurement and should update the Authority if any new circumstances or information arises, or there are any changes to information already provided to the Authority. Failure to do so, and/or to properly manage any conflicts of interest may result in a quotation being rejected.

Provided that it has been carried out in an open, fair and transparent manner, routine pre-market engagement carried out by the Authority should not represent a conflict of interest for the supplier.



## **Section 2: The Invitation**

### **Specification of Requirements**

This Section sets out the Authority's requirements.

### **Background to Natural England**

The Authority is Natural England. Natural England (NE) is the government's advisor on the natural environment. 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. 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. This project forms part of the Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment programme (mNCEA).

Further information about the Authority can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>

### **Background to the specific work area**

The marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) is a flagship Defra research and development programme. The mNCEA began in 2021 with a pilot year and has since developed into a full 3-year programme running from April 2022 until March 2025. The overarching aim is to deliver evidence, tools and guidance on the extent and condition of marine natural capital assets, the ecosystem services they provide and the trade-offs that are necessary in realising the natural capital benefits of most importance to society. Specialists across Natural England, the Environment Agency, Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science, Marine Management Organisation and Joint Nature Conservation Committee are working collaboratively to develop and deliver the mNCEA programme.

### **Project background**

The Wash has many overlapping designations. The Wash Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the largest SSSI in England. The Wash is also protected by the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC), The Wash Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Site and The Wash National Nature Reserve (NNR). Oystercatcher are a designated feature of the SPA and rely upon the intertidal mussel and cockle beds as an important food source. The intertidal mussel beds are a subfeature of Annex I Reef, a designated feature of the SAC. The intertidal cockle beds provide important supporting habitat for SPA birds and are a characteristic community for Intertidal

sand and muddy sand, a subfeature of Annex I mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, another designated feature of the SAC. All are also protected under the SSSI. The condition of the oystercatcher, cockle beds, and mussel beds has been a cause of concern for many years and there has been ongoing work between partner organisations to try and restore them to favourable condition.

Shellfish mortalities have been occurring in The Wash since 2008-10. There is evidence of cockle dying after reaching spawning size (EIFCA, 2023), indicating that they may be too energetically compromised to survive spawning. This is thought to be altering the population dynamics of the cockle beds, shifting towards a system dominated by juveniles with fewer age classes present. This is a concern for fisheries and for SPA species reliant on shellfish stocks as a food source.

Eastern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (EIFCA) use a bird food model (BFM) in The Wash to determine how many tonnes of cockle and mussel are required to support the oystercatcher population, and therefore how many tonnes are available as Total Allowable Catch for the shellfisheries. This BFM does not account for these 'atypical' mortalities that have been occurring over the last decade, so may not be accurately calculating how much food is available for birds during the overwintering period.

Research by EIFCA and Cefas has been underway since 2020, investigating the pathogenic drivers of the shellfish mortalities. A novel parasite (*Marteilia cocosarum*) has been identified in the cockle, closely related to the parasite that is thought to be responsible for the crash of the Burry Inlet cockle fishery. More recently, a disseminated neoplasia has also been identified. The pathogenic drivers of the mussel mortalities are less defined, but *Mytilicola intestinalis* has been identified in the mussels and may be a contributing factor.

The causes of the mortalities are likely multifactorial, with environmental and human pressures thought to be playing a role – either by reducing the immune capacity of shellfish, reducing the ecosystem resilience as a whole, or altering the disease dynamics within cockle beds.

The proposed study will have the overall goal of identifying factors that may be contributing to mortalities of cockle within The Wash, which will help to inform the parameters of Bird Food Models and inform the management of the site.

Reference: Eastern IFCA (2023) Review of the cockle fishery Total Allowable Catch and rationale for potential changes. Available at: [https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023\\_06\\_02\\_Review\\_of\\_Cockle\\_TAC\\_online\\_version.pdf](https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023_06_02_Review_of_Cockle_TAC_online_version.pdf)

## **Requirement**

This commission is for a biostatistician to analyse data collected by this project in 2024 (see table 1), to address the project aims:

**Aim 1:** To determine the growth and mortality rates of cockle over the year

**Aim 2:** To investigate the scale of 'atypical' mortality

**Aim 3:** To investigate the effects of environmental parameters on cockle mortality, including multifactorial drivers

The contractor should be familiar with marine ecosystems and intertidal processes. This is a complex system, with data collected across different spatial and temporal scales. A significant component of this work will be data wrangling, data cleaning, and joining pre-analysis discussions to select the most appropriate predictors. Data is summarised in Table 1.

The aim of the analysis is to investigate multifactorial drivers of shellfish mortality; factors that may have a combined effect, but are independently sublethal. There may be multiple methods that are appropriate for this analysis, such as a frequentist or Bayesian statistical model. The biostatistician is expected to consider the benefits of various methods and discuss this with the Natural England project team before carrying out the analysis.

The contractor will be required to liaise with project partners, who hold the data and have local expertise (i.e. the Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Cefas).

### **Task 1: Estimating scale of atypical cockle mortality, using spring and winter stock assessments**

- Estimate a baseline 'healthy' mortality rate by collecting historical stock assessment data from EIFCA for the 6 key beds. Analyse trends in population dynamics over time, calculate average annual mortality rates for each bed.
- Account for additional drivers of cockle mortality utilising information such as fisheries landings reports and mapping high-use bird feeding areas.
- Utilise supporting evidence provided by fisher reports (forms, photographs), which includes information on areas where 'atypical' mortality have been observed. This will help to distinguish between other mortality events (e.g. density dependent mortality a.k.a ridging out).

### **Task 2: Determine the most appropriate external variables to include in analysis**

- Identify and group relevant predictors by listing potential factors that could influence cockle mortality, consulting with experts to prioritise variables based on perceived importance. Engage with Natural England, EIFCA, Cefas and Environment Agency on these decisions.

- Liaise with project partners (such as Environment Agency) to ensure full consideration of covariates (e.g. relationship to consider between particle size analysis and certain contaminants)

### **Task 3: Undertake statistical analysis**

- Data wrangling and data cleaning
- Conduct preliminary data exploration by performing descriptive statistics for all variables, creating visualisations to identify patterns and outliers, and testing for normality and other statistical assumptions. This should include simple statistical tests to compare hydrological parameters between beds, assess differences in mortality rates between beds, and calculate correlation coefficients between individual variables and mortality rates.
- Select appropriate statistical methods for the analysis, providing justification for chosen methods and explain reasoning to the project team before proceeding.
- Present the proposed analytical approach to the project team for discussion and refinement. Maintain communication throughout the analysis, updating on progress and discussing any challenges or unexpected findings.
- Undertake multifactorial analysis to assess combined effects of multiple variables on cockle mortality using the agreed upon methodology.

### **Task 4: Produce report of findings**

- Produce a full report of the project which will be published on the Natural England Access to Evidence Catalogue. This should include an executive summary, introduction and background, methodology, results, discussion. The methodology should be fully reproducible and provide detailed descriptions of all data sources, explaining the rationale behind variable selection, documenting all data preprocessing steps, and describing statistical tests and models, including assumptions and limitations. Visualizations should be available to communicate key findings to non-technical audiences. The report should also include any recommendations for future monitoring or further study.
- Provide well-commented scripts and data that were used for the analyses, including a data dictionary explaining all variables, and organizing raw and processed data in a logical file structure.
- Conduct internal review and revision of the report, sharing the draft with the project team and other stakeholders for feedback, and revising the report based on feedback and addressing any concerns or questions raised.

Table 1: Surveys & data summary

Surveys & Data	Data format	Purpose	Spatial scale & data comments
Spring cockle stock assessment 2024 – May 2024	<p>Spreadsheet &amp; GIS</p> <p>Cockle abundance, weight, size, calculations of biomass, density &amp; age cohorts – all cockle beds. Data is taken at station-level (&gt;1000 stations in The Wash, spread across 20 cockle beds).</p>	<p>Baseline of cockle population before fishing &amp; mortality season.</p>	<p>Station-level</p> <p>&gt;1100 stations across The Wash, evenly spaced, each station is 12.44 ha.</p> <p>However, other surveys (i.e. contaminants &amp; hydrological parameters) are focusing on 6 cockle beds, so these will be the areas we are investigating environmental drivers for.</p> <p>Cockle mortality to be estimated across all cockle beds, but drivers to only be investigated across 6 beds.</p>
Winter cockle stock assessment 2024 – November / December 2024	<p>Spreadsheet &amp; GIS</p> <p>Repeat of spring data – Cockle abundance, weight, size, calculations of biomass, density &amp; age cohorts – all cockle beds. Data is taken at station-level (&gt;1000 stations in The Wash, spread across 20 cockle beds).</p> <p>Dependent on weather, may just focus on 6 key beds.</p>	<p>Population after mortality has occurred, when food availability data is needed for overwintering birds.</p> <p>This will be used with the spring assessment &amp; the fisheries landing data to estimate mortality.</p>	<p>Station-level</p> <p>&gt;1100 stations across The Wash, evenly spaced, each station is 12.44 ha.</p> <p>However, other surveys (i.e. contaminants &amp; hydrological parameters) are focusing on 6 cockle beds, so these will be the areas we are investigating environmental drivers for.</p> <p>Cockle mortality to be estimated across all cockle beds, but drivers to only be investigated across 6 beds.</p> <p>These estimations will be limited by the resolution of the fisheries landings data, which is only reported at bed-level and in tonnes. Will need to transform the landings data first, to estimate growth</p>

			<p>between spring survey &amp; the month fished.</p> <p>These cockle surveys will happen in Nov/Dec, months after the start of the overwintering bird period. This will introduce more uncertainty (i.e. need to account for bird predation/include a weighting to account for higher feeding areas).</p>
Fisheries landing data	<p>Reports from Eastern IFCA</p> <p>Fishers report cockle landings per bed, in tonnes.</p>	<p>Fisheries landings data, will feed into calculations for amount of <i>atypical</i> mortality between spring + winter surveys.</p>	<p>Cockle bed level</p> <p>Approx. 20 beds across The Wash, of varying sizes (~500-2000 ha).</p> <p>This will limit us, as we can only estimate mortality to bed level.</p> <p>Data is in different units – the cockle stock assessments give us abundance/size/weight to calculate biomass, but fisheries landings are only reported in tonnes. Data will need to be processed to account for growth (using a rough growth rate &amp; month of landings report).</p>
Cockle mortality observations – Summer 2024	<p>Fisher reports - Photographs (with GPS coordinates) and forms (semi-quantitative assessment, reporting high/medium/low mortality).</p> <p>EIFCA mortality recording (ad hoc, approx. 3 trips) - Photographs (with GPS coordinates) and forms</p>	<p>At the end of the season there will be multiple factors that could have contributed to mortalities (fishing pressure, bird food, baseline natural mortality, density dependent ridging out, 'atypical' mortality).</p> <p>We are interested in estimating how much is attributed to the atypical mortality, and these reports</p>	<p>Cockle bed level</p> <p>Reports from fishers to inform EIFCA trips to record atypical mortalities across the 6 target beds. Will provide supporting evidence for what conditions on each bed have been like over the year.</p>

	(semi-quantitative assessment, reporting high/medium/low mortality), notes/observations.	will provide supporting evidence for what conditions on each bed have been like over the year.	Should help to inform areas where there have been mass mortalities due to other factors (e.g. density dependent ridging out), or where atypical mortality has been reported.
Sediment & water sampling – July 2024	<p>Lab report, analysis for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Particle size analysis [PSA] – sediments only</li> <li>• Metals Suite (As, Cd, Cr, Cu, Hg, Ni, Pb, Zn)</li> <li>• PAHs (DTI 2-6 Ring Aromatics &amp; EPA 16)</li> <li>• Total Hydrocarbon Content (including Saturates)</li> <li>• Organochlorine Pesticides</li> <li>• Phosphate as PO<sub>4</sub></li> <li>• Nitrate</li> <li>• Total Organic Carbon</li> </ul> <p>60 sediment and 30 water samples collected in total: 10 sediment samples &amp; 5 water samples collected from 6 beds. Sample points chosen to represent different conditions across each bed.</p>	<p>Identify whether/how contaminants vary between the beds, and whether there are correlations between mortalities &amp; these factors.</p> <p>Identify whether/how contaminants vary across different conditions (e.g. grouped by distance from rivers, sediment types, fishing pressure).</p>	<p>Sample points</p> <p>Point samples taken from a sample of stations, across 6 cockle beds (each cockle bed is a different size). 10 sediment samples + 5 water samples taken from each bed.</p> <p>Sample points chosen to represent different conditions across each bed, so can be grouped by bed and by different conditions (i.e. PSA, distance from river, distance from channel).</p>

Hydrological parameters (temperature, pH, salinity, turbidity, chlorophyll-A) – July 23-Dec 24 (monthly)	Spreadsheet	Identify whether/how hydrological parameters vary between the beds, and whether there are correlations between mortalities & these factors.	<p>Monthly point samples taken across 2-3 beds.</p> <p>Not yet clear what data is available. There will be some hydrological data that needs to be assessed, but will likely be gappy.</p> <p>To be grouped by bed (or closest available) to investigate if they differ, and if correlated with mortalities.</p>

**Suppliers are to fill in the project details and costing template below in ANNEX 1 AND 2**

#### **Timeline for project delivery**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
<b>Begin project plan</b>  Task 1 – Work can begin on first stage of task 1, using historic information & partner input to estimate healthy mortality rate  Task 2 – Discussions begin with partners to confirm predictors to be assessed  Task 3 - Data cleaning & wrangling work started on all data (exc. winter stock assessments)	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2024
<b>Finalise project plan</b>  Task 2 - Agree which variables to include in analysis & most appropriate method	17 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
<b>Undertake analysis</b>  Task 1 - Final surveys completed in December 2024 (required to finalise task 1).  Task 3 – Statistical analysis undertaken	21 <sup>st</sup> February 2025   (Pproject team to return comments by 7 <sup>th</sup> March)



<b>Draft report &amp; outputs</b>	
Task 4 – Initial report provided, feedback provided by project team	
<b>Final report &amp; outputs</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> March 2025
Task 4 – Any required changes completed	

Any changes to this timetable should be discussed with Pip Mountjoy and Lauren Ross.

## 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 sent after the final report and all relevant work is complete, received and approved by Natural England.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of **4 months** to end no later than **31/03/25**. Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period. We may at our sole discretion extend this contract to include related or further work. Any extension shall be agreed in writing in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

## Evaluation Methodology

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

Technical – **60%**

Commercial – **40%**

## Evaluation criteria

Evaluation weightings are **60%** technical and **40%** commercial, the winning tenderer will be the highest scoring combined score.

Criteria	Weighting	Evaluation topic & Sub-criteria weighting	Weighted Question
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Technical	60%	Proposal	<b>Methodology- Quality of Proposal</b>	2 Questions Q1.1 (40% of technical score available) Q1.2 (40% of technical score available)
			<b>Key personnel</b>	1 Question Q2.1 (10% of technical score available)
			<b>Quality Assurance measures</b>	1 Question Q3.1 (10% of technical score available)
			<b>Availability/ capacity</b>	1 Question (Pass/Fail) Q4.1
Price	40%	<b>Whole life cost of the proposed Contract</b>	<b>Commercial Model</b>	1 Question (100% of commercial score available)

### 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.

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

Technical evaluation is assessed using the evaluation topics and sub-criteria stated in the Evaluation Criteria section above.

Separate submissions for each technical question should be provided and will be evaluated in isolation. Tenderers should provide answers that meet the criteria of each technical question.

Methodology	Detailed Evaluation Criteria
<p>Q1.1 (40%)</p> <p>Detail a proposed methodology for tasks 1 to 4, including considerations that would inform choice of statistical method</p>	<p>Quality of proposal based on the proposed statistical methodology, including consideration of data limitations and requirement for data cleaning/wrangling.</p> <p>The response should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of the requirements.</li> </ol>

	<p>2. Be a clear, practical, achievable, and cost-effective methodology to deliver these requirements.</p> <p>3. Have information in sufficient detail to allow a full appraisal of the suitability of the approach to deliver for the project.</p>
Q1.2 Evidence of outputs & repeatability (40%)	<p>The ability of the analysis to be understood and replicated.</p> <p>The response should set out how the results will be presented to communicate key findings, and how the protocol, rationale, data pre-processing and statistical tests will be provided.</p>

Key Personnel (10%)	Detailed Evaluation Criteria
Q2.1 Please provide evidence of experience of key staff	Please provide CV of key staff involved in project as well evidence of relevant projects and experience.

Quality Assurance (10%)	Detailed Evaluation Criteria
Q3.1 Please provide evidence of the quality assurance methods and metrics.	Please provide evidence of quality assurance methods which will be used

Availability (Pass/Fail)	Detailed Evaluation Criteria
Q4.1 Provide a statement on your availability & capacity carry out the work	Please supply a proposed schedule of work, stating the timescales you will be able to

	execute and deliver the products specified above.
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### **Commercial (40%)**

The Contract is to be awarded as a fixed 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 deliverable/objective used in the delivery of this requirement.

### **Calculation Method**

The method for calculating the weighted scores is as follows:

#### **Commercial**

Score = (Lowest Quotation Price / Supplier's Quotation Price) x 40% (Maximum available marks)

#### **Technical**

Score = (Bidder's Total Technical Score / Highest Technical Score) x 60% (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):  $WC + WT = TWS$ .

### **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 Mandatory Requirements (Annex 1)
- completed Acceptance of Terms and Conditions (Annex 2)
- completed Commercial Response template (Annex 3)
- separate response submission for each technical question (in accordance with the response instructions) (Annex 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.

**Annex 1: Commercial Response Template**

Edit as required.

Task / Unit	Cost (including VAT)
TOTAL	

**Annex 2: Technical Response Template**

See section specification and evaluation criteria for details

Question	Response
<p>Q1.1 (40%)</p> <p>Detail a proposed methodology for tasks 1 to 4, including considerations that would inform choice of statistical method</p>	
<p>Q1.2 Evidence of outputs &amp; repeatability (40%)</p>	
<p>Key Personnel</p> <p>Q2.1 Please provide evidence of experience of key staff</p>	
<p>Quality Assurance</p> <p>Q3.1 Please provide evidence of the quality assurance methods and metrics.</p>	
<p>Availability</p> <p>Q4.1 Provide a statement on your availability &amp; capacity carry out the work</p>	

## Annex 3 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](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)

Question no.	Question	Response
		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)	<p>If you have answered yes to question 2.1(a), please provide further details.</p> <p>Date of conviction, specify which of the grounds listed the conviction was for, and the reasons for conviction.</p> <p>Identity of who has been convicted</p> <p>If the relevant documentation is available electronically please provide the web address, issuing authority, precise reference of the documents.</p>	

Question no.	Question	Response
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)	<p>The detailed grounds for discretionary exclusion of an organisation are set out on this <a href="#">webpage</a>, which should be referred to before completing these questions.</p> <p>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</p>	
2.2(b)	Breach of environmental obligations?	<p>(Yes / No)</p> <p>If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f)</p>
2.2(c)	Breach of social obligations?	<p>(Yes / No)</p> <p>If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f)</p>
2.2(d)	Breach of labour law obligations?	<p>(Yes / No)</p> <p>If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f)</p>
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?	<p>(Yes / No)</p> <p>If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f)</p>
2.2 (f)	If you have answered Yes to any of the above, explain what measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (Self Cleaning)	

## Annex 4 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 \_\_\_\_\_