

**POLICY AND ECONOMICS FOR AGROECOLOGY AND REGENERATIVE FARMING IN WWF’S PREFERRED PATHWAY TO NET-ZERO AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE**

**SUMMARY**

WWF-UK seeks a consultant to build on existing evidence with a view to researching and making recommendations for different food system actors on how to realise the opportunities in and how best to overcome the barriers to driving a large scale shift to agroecology and regenerative agriculture.

**INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT**

As set out in our “Land of Plenty” report, WWF is calling for a new vision for UK landscapes, with a nature-positive approach to net zero and for the UK Government to commit to explicit emission reduction targets for the agriculture and land use sectors. These targets currently are to:

* Reduce UK direct agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 35% by 2030 and 51% by 2050 on 2018 levels
* Switch UK land from a net source of GHG emissions to a net sink by 2040 at the very latest
* Halt and reverse the loss of UK nature by 2030
* Cut UK farming’s overseas carbon footprint particularly relating to soy feed and fertiliser inputs by at least 31% by 2030 and 57% by 2050 on 2018 levels

WWF has commissioned work to identify the feasibility of a pathway to net zero that prioritises regenerative approaches to agriculture that also support nature’s recovery in the UK, highlighting that solutions and pathways will vary across landscapes and seascapes, and recognising the role that technology and consumer demands can play in alleviating trade-offs to net-zero.

Meanwhile, the Soil Association published a report titled ‘[The Economics of a Transition to Agroecological Farm Businesses](https://www.soilassociation.org/media/24795/economics-of-a-transition-to-agroecological-farming-businesses-report.pdf)’. The report set out the economic outlook for transition to agroecology for a range of farm types, using a range of assumptions and scenarios. It makes recommendations on subjects including government policy, supply chains and farm business structure. WWF have also commissioned related work on sustainable UK food supply chains in the context of farmer to retailer change: the consultant’s report (due to be published by April) will be made available to the successful bidder.

We recognise that changes in agricultural practices will have consequences for the agricultural sector as a whole as well as for individual farmers, and we want to test how WWF’s preferred pathway and the economic outlook modelled for farm businesses in Soil Association’s work can be delivered.

**AGROECOLOGY SYMPOSIUM – 27 MARCH**

WWF and Soil Association are holding a symposium involving a panel session and breakout group discussions on the transition to agroecology at scale on 27 March. This event will provide farmers, growers, policy-makers, politicians, social movements and farming and environmental NGOs an opportunity to identify opportunities and discuss how to overcome barriers to this shift.

**MAIN PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

WWF are looking for consultant(s) to test and make detailed recommendations for different food system actors on how to realise the opportunities in and how best to overcome the barriers to driving a large scale shift to agroecology and regenerative agriculture.

This includes building on and taking forward the research, findings and recommendations of the report Soil Association published, by corroborating, adding detail and testing related scenarios with an emphasis on supporting the transition among medium- to large-scale/ commercial farmers and growers.

While the economics work is critical, the work commissioned should consider other important actions for stakeholders to take that facilitate the transition, whether indirectly impacting farm profitability or not. The findings will then be used to advocate those actions to stakeholders, with the consultant’s involvement towards the end of the project.

Consultants will need to produce a proposal that can adapt to the discussions during the Agroecology Symposium on March 27th.

In answering this main research question, we are also interested in how the consultant weaves in the following:

* widening the analysis from farm scale to cover the economic costs and benefits of this shift for: the agricultural sector; the food system[[1]](#footnote-2); rural areas; and the wider economy in comparison to other scenarios?
* How these costs and benefits vary according to whether or not governments and other actors, including retailers and supply chain actors, implement the actions explored in the research?
* What social impacts the transition will have?
* How the costs of transition will be distributed?

In delivering this work, consultants should consider other options available to farmers and growers, such as intensification or business as usual, in order to set out a clear rationale for taking the agroecological approach when the private and public policy is in place. Consultants should also consider multiple time scales (both for farm-scale transition, and, sector/policy scale to the end of the UK agricultural transition to the late 2020s, the decade or so for achieving 6th climate budget/environment act targets, and to some extent out to 2050).

The scope of the work is UK-wide in the context of the questions set out above. However, the final report should acknowledge the role of UK trade policy and import standards and reflect that a UK commitment to net zero through regenerative agriculture would need to address the potential for being undercut by imports from countries with lower environmental standards.

The facilitation of private investment through stand-alone markets for environmental services is important in the transition to agroecology, but is not intended to be a focus in this project because of other work WWF and others have commissioned. However, issues around the interface between private investment and other pro-agroecological policies and aspects of food buying that drive farm practice are should be covered in the report.

The consultant should draw on “Land of Plenty” supporting evidence, especially “the potential of agroecological solutions and dietary shifts (Aberdeen University)” report, and on the Soil Association commissioned report to define the agroecological transition.

**DELIVERABLES**

If possible, the contractor would attend and take notes during the workshop on 27 March.

The consultant will produce a report (40-80 pages) with 1-3 page executive summary, and slide deck for advocating how and why different stakeholders might best take the actions recommended for delivering an agroecological transition.

Consultants will be expected to present, alongside WWF, to between 2 and 5 groups of policy-makers/stakeholders.

**TIMEFRAME**

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| Closing date for return of submissions: | 10am Thursday 23rd March 2023 |
| Agroecology workshop (attendance if possible, and, if a clear decision can be made on the basis of proposals): | 10-4 Monday 27th March 2023 + networking time |
| Contract Initiation meeting: | ASAP after award |
| Draft outputs: | By mid September 2023 |
| Completion of final written outputs: | By early October 2023 |
| Advocacy presentations | October/November 2023 |

**PRICE** **(INCL/EXCL VAT)**

Specify whether VAT included or excluded.

Do not include expenses, which will be paid according to WWF’s standard T&Cs, but do include, itemised in your pricing, staff time for travel, meetings and potentially overnight stays in presenting findings to policy-makers.

**BUDGET (INCL VAT)**

£45,000

This project is funded through the WWF and Tesco Partnership.

**ASSESSMENT CRITERA**

Consultants should detail clearly their proposed methodology for developing convincing deliverables.

WWF will consider proposals and appoint the successful consultant through a mix of qualitative and quantitative assessment, to include:

* Demonstration of familiarity with and understanding of relevant literature
* Quality of the submission and adherence to the brief
* Clarity, quality and effectiveness of the proposed methodology and ability to deliver the brief
* Expertise and skills of staff in relation to the brief
* Cost and overall resource inputs, including value for money
* Sustainable Procurement Questionnaire

Therefore, please include in your proposal:

* a schedule detailing the consultants’ team, their role in the project, and the amount of time each person will allocate to delivery
* background of the consultancy and CVs of each member of the team
* timeline for delivery of the outputs and project completion reflecting the ‘timeframe’ above

**WWF AND SOIL ASSOCIATION REFERENCES**

Among the literature relevant to this study are these two reports.

The Economics of a Transition to Agroecological Farm Businesses  
<https://www.soilassociation.org/media/24795/economics-of-a-transition-to-agroecological-farming-businesses-report.pdf>

Land of Plenty and supporting evidence

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/land-of-plenty>

**PUBLICATION/CONTACTS**

WWF’s Standard Terms and Conditions apply and may be accessed via the link on the Contracts Finder listing.

**Date:** 6 March 2023

**Commissioned by:** WWF-UK, Living Planet Centre, Brewery Road, Woking, GU21 4LL

**Contact person:** Tom Stuart [tstuart@wwf.org.uk](mailto:tstuart@wwf.org.uk)

1. See WWF’s ‘Land of Plenty’ report for context. Additionally, in addressing the food systems level question, it would be valuable to consider yields in terms of final edible products for humans, alongside absolute tonnes of food produced, which would demonstrate the costs and trade-offs of, for example, producing animal feed in the UK. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)