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Request for Quotation

**Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework-**

**Developing a method to apportion national targets to individual protected landscapes**

## 

## Request for Quotation

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**Developing a method to apportion national targets to individual protected landscapes**

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 **1st September 2022 at 12:00 noon**: [liz.bingham@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:liz.bingham@naturalengland.org.uk) .

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

**Contact details and timeline**

Liz Bingham 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 | 10th August 2022 |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 22nd August 2022 at 12 noon |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 1st September 2022 at 12 noon |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 16th September 2022 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 19th September 2022 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration | 30th November 2022 |

### 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 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs acting as part of Natural England |
| “RFQ” | Means this Request for Quotation and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to suppliers |
| “Contract” | Means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier. |

### Conditions applying to the RFQ

You should examine your 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.

By submitting a quotation, the supplier 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

Natural England’s Standard Condensed Terms and Conditions found at [Procurement at Natural England - Natural England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement) 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

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 [Natural England](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/).

A. Background

The work is set within the context of the [Government's response](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response) to the Landscapes Review, an independent review led by Julian Glover in 2019 into whether the protections for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England are still fit for purpose. In the response, the Government stated that:

*‘By January 2023, new ambitious outcomes will be agreed for the role of protected landscapes in delivering on the government’s goals for nature recovery and climate, aligned with the revised 25 Year Environment Plan[[1]](#footnote-2) and interim environmental targets under the Environment Act 2021 and the Net Zero Strategy’*.

Since the Review Response was published, Defra has been liaising with Natural England and other partners to identify the priority nationally aligned targets that they will set for all 44 protected landscapes[[2]](#footnote-3) as a collective in early 2023 in line with the publication of the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) in January 2023.

In some cases, protected landscapes’ collective contributions to a national target may be proportional. For example, of the Government’s target to restore approximately 280,000ha of peat in England by 2050[[3]](#footnote-4), National Parks and AONBs may be expected to contribute 168,000 hectares (60%), as they collectively contain 60% of England’s peatland. In other instances, using proportional contributions will be less suitable.

In parallel, Natural England is leading work to design an associated Outcomes Framework to help measure progress against the targets through a set of indicators. The Outcomes Framework will also identify further indicators relevant to the statutory purposes of the protected landscapes to inform broader monitoring activity and reporting through the management planning process. The targets and indicators will be grouped under the four themes set out in the Landscape Review Response (nature, climate, people and place), though in practice many will deliver against more than one theme.

Two working groups (one internal, the other external) have been set up to identify and refine the targets and indicators and to agree the datasets underpinning them. A draft list of the priority targets and indicators will be provided to the contractor upon appointment. From August to October 2022, Defra and Natural England will liaise with partners and stakeholders beyond the external working group seeking their views on the draft targets and indicators, before refining them accordingly. Any proposals to add to or amend the draft list of priority targets and indicators must be approved by both working groups.

Beyond January 2023, Natural England will work in partnership with National Parks England (NPE) the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) and individual protected landscapes to apportion the collective contributions to these targets among the National Parks and AONBs. It is anticipated that Natural England and other data-holders will be able to provide data and/or statistics by that point for each National Park and AONB. Natural England will also support National Park Authorities, the Broads Authority and AONB Partnerships/ Conservation Boards in translating these apportioned targets into their forthcoming management plans. Although steered by Natural England, the process will be bottom up; utilising the expertise of the individual protected landscapes whilst recognising that the results of the process will not be ‘set in stone’ and are likely to evolve over time.

Individual protected landscapes may not be expected to contribute to every target and every outcome. Much will depend on local circumstances. For example, if a National Park or AONB does not contain any peatland, it may not be expected to contribute to peatland restoration targets. Other factors will also need to be considered when targets are apportioned which this contract will help us to identify, not least the characteristics and special qualities that underpin the landscapes of each NP/AONB, and available resources to drive delivery through partnership working.

Equally, protected landscape bodies (National Park Authorities and AONB partnerships / Conservation Boards) will not be held uniquely responsible for delivering the targets. We expect a wide range of partners, such as local authorities NGOs, businesses (particularly land managers) and government agencies to contribute to the delivery of the targets. In brief the targets will be for the place rather than any one body.

The Outcomes Framework will build upon the [Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5646437593382912) (MEOPL), which was launched in 2013. This national partnership programme monitors a range of environmental outcomes in National Parks and AONBs, using indicators to illustrate what is happening in their areas relating to the criteria for which they were designated. These indicators are informed by data that is provided through a collaboration of partners. Natural England has distributed this data to all National Park Authorities and AONB partnerships on an annual basis, and some of this information will inform the new Outcomes Framework. It is anticipated that the Outcomes Framework will replace MEOPL in due course.

LUC undertook a review of MEOPL on behalf of Natural England in 2021. The report ‘Review of the Framework for Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL)’ will be made available on appointment, and the contractor should take its recommendations into account where relevant.

B. Contract requirements

**Aims**

The overall aim of this project is to identify a method to apportion the collective protected landscape targets contained within the Outcomes Framework to individual National Parks and AONBs. Specifically, it aims to:

* 1. Explore how a character-based approach to apportionment could be used – that is, gaining an understanding of how target apportionment should reflect the special qualities and characteristics that underpin each protected landscape.
  2. Understand how a method can consider the existing ‘stock’ or assets contained within the protected landscapes relevant to the outcomes sought through the targets, whilst looking for opportunities to deliver new or restored/enhanced assets/features where appropriate (e.g. peat or other habitat restoration, tree planting/woodland regeneration). This will ensure that the apportioned targets are both realistic and ambitious in terms of delivering more for nature, climate, people and place.
  3. Explore how the apportionment methodology and target-setting can be informed by local delivery and activities already in progress – such as through protected landscapes’ statutory Management Plans, Nature Recovery Plans and forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs).
  4. Explore how the target setting fits with the policies and aspirations within protected landscape management plans and associated landscape character assessments.
  5. Increase our understanding of the opportunities and any potential limitations associated with apportioning the national targets. This should include data suitability/availability (including national versus local data), resource within AONB/National Park teams, capacity both internally and externally to deliver the outcomes, and inter-relationships/trade-offs between different targets. The approach should therefore be designed to be flexible, to allow future iterations to be made.
  6. Use these insights to recommend an approach to apportioning the targets, which will be trialled under a second contract and rolled out (including through a final contract) from early 2023.

**Tasks**

We would welcome contractors developing their own methodology to meet the above aims through a series of costed tasks. These will include the following key stages:

**Stage 1: Identify a character-based approach to apportionment**

Propose a landscape character-based approach to apportioning the Outcomes Framework’s collective targets to individual protected landscapes. This should be based on the natural and cultural assets present in individual National Parks and AONBs, and how they combine to create a distinctive character and underpin the special qualities of the designation[[4]](#footnote-5). It should also:

* Explore taking account of the current ‘stock’ of features/attributes within a protected landscape (e.g. the current extent of particular habitats or number of heritage assets) that is subject to the Framework’s targets. This is so that individual targets can be considered within the local context.
* Consider the potential for places ‘to do more’ (i.e. not just considering the baseline ‘stock’ situation), through actions for restoration and/or enhancement.
* Consider relationships or potential trade-offs between different target outcomes and how this should be addressed through the methodology.
* Reflect key policy positions – e.g. *Right Tree, Right Place*.
* Explore how the emerging collective targets relate to targets already set locally (e.g. in Management/ Partnership Plans, National Park Nature Recovery Prospectuses and AONB Nature Recovery Plans) and whether there is any scope to drive ambition further in the national context.
* Consider the relationship between nationally available data and local data to inform target delivery, and identify any potential gaps.
* Consider requirements for joint working across administrative boundaries (including beyond the boundaries of the protected landscapes) when delivering targets. Examples may include targets relating to species abundance, nature recovery, water quality and access/ engagement.

**Stage 2: Test apportionment approach**

Test the identified approach using at least four targets on at least two contrasting protected landscapes (one AONB, one National Park with differing characteristics – to be agreed with Natural England) to see how an approach could work. The contractor should liaise with Natural England to ensure that we can supply ‘stock’ figures relating to the targets chosen. Please note that a more detailed pilot phase will be commissioned through a subsequent contract.

**Stage 3: Report and recommendations**

The outcomes of stages 1 and 2 should be presented to the External Working Group to provide an opportunity to discuss the findings and provide feedback, before producing the project report. The report should meet Natural England’s Commissioned Report Writing Guidance (provided on appointment). The report content should include:

* A suggested apportionment methodology.
* Key issues / limitations to the approach – including incidences where a character-based approach to target apportionment may not work in practice (e.g. targets which may not be directly linked to physical landscape features/assets).
* Results of the pilot testing.
* Recommendations for the Stage 2 contract (full pilot testing).

**Summary of required outputs**

This contract will require the following outputs:

* A draft proposal for an apportionment approach produced at the end of Stage 1, to be tested under Stage 2. This draft should be produced in Word format and presented to the project Steering Group at a virtual meeting for discussion. The contractor should take account of any feedback and amend the proposal before testing if required.
* Results of the testing undertaken under Stage 2, set out in a paper and presented to the Outcomes Framework External Working Group (virtual meeting).
* A draft report (Stage 3) encompassing the above outputs and setting out recommendations and key issues/limitations. The draft should be circulated electronically for Steering Group comments.
* Final report that takes account of the Project Steering Group comments, produced in both PDF and Word format.

**Meetings**

Meetings and key contact points should be built into the tender response, including:

* An initial inception meeting with Natural England, Defra, National Association of AONBs and National Parks England (Steering Group) to confirm the scope of the work and the steps the contractor intends to meet the project requirements.
* A virtual meeting with the Steering Group at the end of Stage 1.
* A virtual meeting with the Outcomes Framework’s External Working Group at the end of Stage 2.
* A final virtual meeting with the Steering Group to present the draft report.

E-mail or phone liaison with the Project Manager will take place on an ad hoc basis as the work progresses.

C. Skills requirements

To cover the work required, we are looking for a professional contractor/consultant with the following skills and experience. Please provide evidence to support this:

* Research and analytical skills.
* Knowledge of protected landscapes, including AONB/National Park management plans and their planning / policy context.
* Strong knowledge of the wider policy context – including the Landscapes Review, Environment Act and 25 Year Environment Plan/Environment Improvement Plan.
* Knowledge of landscape monitoring approaches, including State of the Park and State of the AONB reporting in particular.
* Knowledge of landscape character and protected landscapes’ ‘special qualities’.
* Good knowledge of the range of data and information relevant to monitoring environmental change – covering aspects relevant to nature, climate, people and place.
* Ability to write clear reports in relation to the environment and landscape.
* Good project management skills and a track record of delivering contracts on time.
* An awareness of the nature of Natural England’s and partners’ work.

D. Timescale

The contract is anticipated to be awarded in September 2022, with work starting as soon as practical after that. The contract is expected to run until end of November 2022. 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 starting and may be subject to further competition.

E. Prices

The contract will be let on a firm price basis (excluding VAT). Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period.

F. Quotation submission

Contractors should include details of:

* The personnel who will be directly involved with this contract, including brief CVs.
* Proposed methodology.
* Timetable.
* Past experience of carrying out similar work.
* Risk assessment and contingencies for ensuring successful completion of the contract.
* Quality assurance measures.

Bids must show a fixed price based on daily rates for project team members. They should follow the below format in providing a breakdown of the overall fixed price against the outputs required.

Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, exclusive of VAT.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Output** | **Staff grade** | **Daily rate** | **Input (days)** | **Total (excl VAT)** |
| Stage 1: Identify a character-based approach to apportionment |  |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 Test apportionment approach |  |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 Report and recommendations |  |  |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  |

G. Evaluation of bids

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

Price – 40%

Quality – 60%

The following quality criteria (overpage) are weighted in accordance with the importance and relevance attached to each one.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | Weighting |
| Understanding of the key aims of the study, tasks and intended outputs | 10% |
| Proposals for apportioning targets and testing the approach(es) | 15% |
| Evidence of previous research skills, knowledge and experience | 15% |
| Key personnel, the roles and contributions to the project | 15% |
| Understanding of risks/constraints | 5% |

The quality criteria will be scored as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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. |

H. Contract management and payments

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by Liz Bingham, [liz.bingham@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:liz.bingham@naturalengland.org.uk), 07900 608328.

The contractor will nominate a project leader who will manage and deliver the project, and liaise with Natural England’s project manager.

We will raise a purchase order to cover the cost of the services and will issue it to the awarded supplier following the contract award. The contractor should invoice Natural England once the project manager has reviewed the final output and deemed it to be satisfactory.

I. 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.

J. Intellectual Property Rights and data

Any intellectual property arising from the contract will belong to Natural England. All data resulting from this project, project documents and other materials will be the property of Natural England.

K. 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.

L. Protection of Personal Data

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

1. 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.

M. 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.

1. The revised 25 Year Environment Plan will be published as the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The 44 ‘protected landscapes’ comprise the Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONBs), National Parks and the Broads Authority. In this document, references to ‘National Parks’ include the Broads. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. As set out in [the Government’s Net Zero Strategy](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf): Build Back Greener (2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Contractors should refer to available Landscape Character Assessment evidence and the special qualities as expressed in protected landscapes’ Management Plans. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)