**Clarifications for Bidders Questions - Effective partnerships for marine nature recovery?**

1. Regarding the technical delivery questions, Q3.1 Project Delivery Plan, Q4.1 Sustainable Procurement and Q4.2 Social Value, is there a page limit? No page limit was set for these questions, however, we would appreciate it if responses could be kept concise. We would recommend ensuring that responses to Q3.1 are kept to 2 pages and 1 page each for Q4.1 and 4.2.
2. Within the list of milestones, Milestone 2 is to establish a NE/Defra research steering group. Please can you confirm the responsibilities of the contractor regarding establishing and running this steering group, if any? There is no responsibility here for the appointed contractor. NE will take responsibility for convening and running the steering group.
3. Are you anticipating that the project methodology would need to go through Natural England’s ethical approval process? If yes could you indicate how long we should allow for this in the work programme? This project will need ethical approval- This should go through the appointed contractor’s ethical approval processes but should meet with NE’s ethical requirements. Where contractors do not have suitable ethical approval process in place for the research, Natural England approvals can be sought and this will take a maximum of two weeks.
4. If the contractor or subcontractors are members of a coastal partnership, does this represent a conflict of interest? No, we would welcome applications from members of coastal partnerships although the proposed approach would need to take their involvement in a coastal partnership into account and should not use themselves as a case study for their own work.
5. The tender document states under “Aims” that Natural England are interested in “how to scale up partnerships to deliver nature recovery across marine, coastal and terrestrial environments nationally”, but the objectives and methods sections refer only to the marine environment, please could you clarify how these two statements work together? The primary focus of this research is marine environments, however we expect the findings and recommendations from the research to have wider relevance to all partnerships for nature recovery and we would like these broader lessons to be captured in the project outputs.
6. The percentages making up the Technical score on pages 14 and 15 of the RfQ don’t add up to 100%. Please clarify? Amendment. 10% is available for management of sustainability and 10% for social value respectively (RFQ states 5%).
7. For question 3.1, page 19 of the RfQ doc lists “safety procedures for field work” – please confirm if this is relevant to this tender exercise and needs to be included in our response? We anticipate the development of case studies to potentially involve fieldwork, and we would therefore expect any proposal to include consideration of relevant safety procedures for the collection of qualitative data.
8. The value listed on Contracts Finder is £49,999. Please confirm if this includes VAT? Please see RFQ document which states ‘Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, inclusive of VAT’. The contract value exclusive of VAT is £41665.83. The Contract value inclusive of VAT is £49,999.
9. Page 16 question 1.1 specifies the response should be no more than 4 pages. Does question 1.2 fall within this page count? Yes- Question 1.2 should be included in the 4page count.
10. Other than the page counts and fonts specified, do you require our technical response to be submitted in a particular format? For example, does each question need to be in a separate document or can we combine our responses? No page limit was set for other questions, however, we would appreciate it if responses could be kept concise. We would recommend ensuring that responses to Q3.1 are kept to 2 pages and 1 page each for Q4.1 and 4.2. Responses should be combined into one document.
11. Can a voluntary run group or collective of individual consultants apply without legal status or do we need legal status such as a company or charity? In summary, CPN can apply but we need you to be aware of the following. You will need to consider who will be legally accountable under the contract. Our legal team need to ensure that you are aware that you would be signing up to our terms and conditions in a personal capacity if your bid is to be successful. This includes consideration that whoever is legally accountable will be personally liable if anything were to go wrong under the contract. If your bid is to be successful, we will need to think about the practicalities of the contract to ensure that we have a clear legal entity signing up to the contract, whether that is a human being or a corporate body/charitable body. This would likely be a further meeting with NE’s legal team at the point of award.
12. The RfQ states: ‘Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, inclusive of VAT’. However, the Commercial Response form states: ‘Prices should exclude VAT’. Please could you confirm how you would like the prices to be submitted on the Commercial Response form?

This is an error in the commercial response template, please add a line to show the amount of VAT which will be applied to your quote.

1. The Commercial Response table includes a line for ‘expenses or other costs’. Could you clarify if estimated expenses should be included in the £49,999 budget? Do you also require a breakdown of the estimated expenses?

Yes any costs or expenses that you think you may incur as a result of the project must be costed within the budget (£49,999 inclusive of VAT). Please break these down as accurately as possible.

1. The RfQ states: ‘Separate submissions for each technical question should be provided and will be evaluated in isolation’. In the previous clarification doc, the answer to Q10 included: ‘Responses should be combined into one document’. Please could you clarify if the responses to the technical questions need to be submitted in separate documents, or if we should combine them into 1 document.

In line Q10 in the clarifications document, question responses should be combined into one document to aid the review process.