



BSF reference number:	008
Cost centre code:	10022602
Date:	25/11/2024
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Proposed start date:	10/02/2025
Proposed end date:	31/12/2025

The specification must not exceed 10 side of A4.

1. Objectives

1.1 Project Background

What work has been done in the area previously, where is the evidence gap?

- This project builds on previous research focused on finding ways to engage wider society in plant health, supporting the public to become plant health citizens that both value and take action in relation to plant health and biosecurity¹.
- Despite many years of public awareness campaigns focused on plant health and biosecurity, previous research has found that public awareness of biosecurity remains low and many members of the public believe that responsibility for plant health lies with others in the supply chain. There is currently no simple way to communicate about plant health and biosecurity to lay publics, and in order to take action at present, members of the public would need to undertake a series of checks for themselves prior to making any plant purchasing decision.
- Previous work has applied behavioural insights and related tools to understand how to encourage and enable positive behavioural change and build the public's capacity and capability to act as plant health citizens. This has included:
 - A national survey.
 - Development of recommendations for plant health engagement of publics by groups / organisations.
 - Application of the TESTS framework (Kettle and Persian, 2022) in relation to two 'risky' behaviours in terms of plant health (specifically in relation to passenger baggage and purchasing plants from online marketplaces), working up detailed behavioural journeys and proposing interventions (Kantar Public, 2023).
 - Delivering a behavioural experiment at Kew Gardens, with accompanying recommendations for visitor engagement.
- The current focus of the parent 'National Conversation on Plant Health' project is on making it easier for the plant buying public to act as responsible plant health citizens, by encouraging them to purchase plants from retailers certified by the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme administered by Plant Healthy Limited². Four main types of retailers are expected to become certified: online plant retailers; multiples (e.g. DIY stores, supermarkets); garden centre chains; and public/botanical gardens with a retail arm. The Plant Healthy certification scheme will be launched to the public in spring 2026, by which time it is anticipated that increasing numbers of plant retailers will have become certified.
- The Forest Research team has delivered an evidence review focused on responding to research questions 1-3 (set out in section 2.3 of this specification) – a summary of this work is available. Significant evidence needs remain, including to:
 - Develop a more detailed picture of the target audience(s) and target behaviour(s) based on new primary research (potentially an online panel survey with a large, representative sample of the plant-buying public). This should seek to capture the following:

¹ As defined in the Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain (2023-2028), "The word 'biosecurity' refers to a set of precautions that aim to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms. These include non-native pests, such as insects, and disease-causing organisms called pathogens, such as some viruses, bacteria and fungi. These pests and pathogens threaten the health of our plants and trees the same way such types of organisms threaten the health of humans and animals."

² <https://planthealthy.org.uk/about>

- Relevant demographic characteristics.
 - Typical expenditure on plants (including seeds, bulbs, ornamentals and edibles), typical number of plant purchases per year and whether they engage in riskier plant purchasing (e.g. seeking out novel plants).
 - Usage of each of the four main retail channels for plant purchasing – e.g. to browse for / purchase plants – and in what combination (exploring ‘multi-channel’ plant purchasing), under which circumstances, for which purposes (impulse / planned purchases; plants for self / others; plants associated with particular celebrations etc).
 - The main factors influencing their plant purchasing choices in general.
 - Attitudes and awareness in relation to plant health and certification schemes.
 - Responsiveness to information about plants from different sources (which sources do they go to for information, which do they particularly trust).
 - Current consumption of certified products (including but not limited to those relevant to plants and gardening, such as pollinator-friendly plants and peat-free compost).
- Develop a bespoke audience segmentation model based on this new primary research.
 - For each segment and for each of the four main retail channels, including ‘multi-channel’ plant purchasing, understand the factors – framed in terms of capabilities, opportunities and motivations – involved. Identify which factors may be most important for each segment, for each channel.
 - Identify the steps involved in purchasing plants from each of the four main types of retail channel, including ‘multi-channel’ purchasing, and understand any variation by target audience segments.
 - Identify the moments of decision or action for these specific behavioural journeys; the barriers and enablers associated with particular steps; and relevant decision points / points of contact or influence where it might be effective to intervene, tailored to the target audience(s).
 - Test the salience of different types of messaging and framing relevant to plant health and biosecurity, including testing responses to Plant Healthy certification branded materials (e.g. the Plant Healthy logo), with people corresponding to target audience segments. Understand people in target audience segments’ expectations relating to labelling for plant health (e.g. how would they expect to find out whether a retailer is Plant Healthy certified?)
 - Explore the relative influence of different types of messenger for specific types of plant purchasing by specific target audiences, and the most appropriate means of disseminating messages for particularly influential messengers tailored to the audience and behaviour.

1.2 Policy Context

What is the policy this research intends to inform? What are the risks of not filling this evidence gap?

- This research is funded by Defra’s Future Proofing Plant Health programme. This supports research that will contribute to protecting plant health by providing evidence, knowledge, tools and solutions for Plant Health Policy as well as other beneficiaries. The ‘National Conversation on Plant Health’ project responds to the programme’s Plant Health Behaviours theme, which focuses on understanding what motivates and constrains individuals and groups to change their behaviour in support of positive outcomes for plant health, overcoming the knowledge to action gap and improving our understanding of the social and cultural values of plants.
- Plant health is a policy priority for the UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government. The project responds to the Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain (2023-

2028)³, which aims to protect Great Britain's plants by encouraging and enabling the government, industry and the public to work together to reduce and manage biosecurity risks from plant pests and pathogens, and to facilitate safe trade. This strategic vision is supported by four outcomes, two of which are directly relevant to this research:

- Outcome 2: a society that values healthy plants, where everyone feels part of a national biosecurity culture and people take extra care when buying plants. Related activities set out in the strategy include raising awareness of the importance of healthy plants and trees and encouraging the adoption of responsible behaviours across society. The Strategy specifically mentions the 'National Conversation on Plant Health' project in its description of how it will deliver against this outcome.
- Outcome 3: a biosecure plant supply chain, where Government and industry works in partnership to support this. The Strategy specifically mentions both promotion and encouraging uptake of the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme as a means of achieving this.

1.3 Stakeholders

Who are the key stakeholders for this project? Include both internal and external stakeholders.

- The **project steering group**, which comprises Jake Morris (Defra), Lucy Carson-Taylor (APHA) and Ali Wilson (Defra).
- **Plant Healthy Limited** – this is a registered charity. It owns both the Plant Health Management Standard and the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme.
- The **Plant Health Alliance** – this is a cross-sectoral group of organisations spanning ornamental horticulture, forestry and general land management that includes trade associations, environmental NGOs and government agencies. The Alliance contributed to drafting the Plant Health Management Standard, which sets out the technical requirements for the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme. The group supports the promotion of Plant Healthy, both within sectors of interest (e.g. horticultural trade, landscaping, forestry) and to the public.
- An **Industry Working Group** – this group will comprise a range of plant retailers that have been certified under the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme or are in the process of becoming certified.
- Stakeholders involved in promoting **National Plant Health Week** – this includes over 20 organisations including government, the Royal Horticultural Society and the Horticultural Trades Association, who collaborate to share messaging around plant health and biosecurity with the public each year.

1.4 High level project objectives

What are you aiming to achieve through this research project? What behaviours are you seeking to influence or understand?

- The overarching objective of this project is to make it easier for members of the public to adopt responsible plant-purchasing behaviours that take into account plant health and biosecurity considerations.
- This project seeks to enable this by encouraging the plant-buying public to choose to purchase plants from retailers certified by the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme.
- The primary behaviours of interest in this project relate to purchasing plants from any of the four main types of retailer anticipated to become certified by the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme

³ [Plant biosecurity strategy for Great Britain \(2023 to 2028\) - GOV.UK](#)

(i.e. garden centre chains, online plant retailers, multiples (supermarkets, DIY shops etc) and public/botanic gardens with a retail arm).

- To note, it is not anticipated that individual plants will be certified at the time of the Plant Healthy public launch in spring 2026: only retailers. The focus therefore needs to be on encouraging members of the public to choose to buy their plants from those retailers in particular.

2. Project Requirements

2.1 Audience Groups

Whose behaviour are you aiming to change and in what context? Include how suppliers will access sample population and any quotas of interest. Please be as specific as possible E.g. dairy farmers in Somerset, UK general population adults aged between 18-35.

To be defined based on a bespoke audience segmentation model developed in this project.

2.2 Theory of Change / Logic Model

If applicable... Do you need support with creating a Theory of Change or a Logic model? If you have already developed one, please submit a copy with this call-off form. If you wish to commission a Theory of Change, please use Defra's Theory of Change [toolkit](#).

N/a

2.3 Research Questions

What are your detailed research questions?

This project is following the TESTS framework, which frames the research questions:

Phase	Research questions	Tasks
Target	RQ1. Who are the target consumers? RQ2. What are the target behaviours?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify key audience segments and specific plant purchasing behaviours• Deliver a prioritisation exercise with key stakeholders to agree which target consumers and behaviours to take forward
Explore	RQ3. When can the target consumers be reached?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop detailed behavioural maps for each target consumer(s) specific to the target behaviour(s), to include moments of decision/action; barriers/enablers associated with particular steps; and points of contact/influence• Obtain feedback from key stakeholders to agree touchpoints where there is potential to intervene

Phase	Research questions	Tasks
Solution	RQ4. How can the target consumers be reached? RQ5. What are the best ways to reach the target consumers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a long list of potential interventions specific to selected touchpoints • Conduct a prioritisation exercise with key stakeholders to develop a shortlist of 1-3 interventions to take through to next stage • Intervention development
Trial	RQ6. Do the interventions change the target behaviours?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a testing protocol tailored to the interventions • Test, monitor and evaluate the interventions' effectiveness
Scale	RQ7. How can the interventions be scaled up and tracked post-launch?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the prototype intervention evaluation and refine intervention(s) as required • Develop plans for deploying the intervention(s) at scale • Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan to understand the impact of intervention(s) on target behaviours for target audiences

2.4 Proposed Methodology

Please see supplier [prospectuses](#) for a range of methods suppliers can offer. You can specify a methodological requirement or ask suppliers to propose an appropriate methodology.

Please propose a research plan for 12 months, spanning two financial years, that would sequentially:

- Address outstanding evidence needs, including producing a bespoke audience segmentation model (relating to RQ1-3).
- Deliver behavioural mapping for target audiences and behaviours (RQ3).
- Develop prototype interventions with input from key stakeholders (RQ4-5).
- Monitor and evaluate the prototype interventions (RQ6).

Opportunities to fill outstanding evidence gaps and test interventions through primary research are anticipated to include: through collaborations with industry partners; testing messages/communication materials in a range of formats during Plant Health Week in 2025 via the network of stakeholders that promote Plant Health Week each year; and through presence at high profile events such as Gardeners' World Live in 2025.

In developing your proposal, please note the following:

- The target audience and behaviours should be selected in consultation with key stakeholders via a prioritisation exercise.
- Key stakeholders should be involved in identifying potential opportunities for intervention once the behavioural journey(s) have been developed.
- Key stakeholders may be able to support intervention testing.

- The Forest Research team can contribute / collaborate on any primary research and assist with organisation and coordination where required.

Please cost for each item separately and separate out costs per financial year, inclusive of VAT.

2.5 Interventions to design or test

If applicable... Do interventions require designing? Are interventions already designed and requiring testing, in which contexts or through which channels?

- The project should both design and test new interventions.
- These interventions should be ready to launch, following testing and refinements, at the Plant Healthy public launch in spring 2026.

2.6 Outcomes to measure

What is the behavioural outcome measure? E.g. participants sign up to a new service, or participants buy local produce.

Members of the public choose to buy plants from Plant Healthy certified retailers.

2.7 Outputs and deliverables

How should findings be reported? Please see supplier [prospectuses](#) for a range of presentation methods. Consider documents for both public and internal government use. For publishable documents, ensure your findings comply with [accessibility requirements](#) and use Defra templates wherever possible.

- A final report suitable for publication, that adheres to Defra's and Forest Research's accessibility requirements.
- A slide deck to summarise findings from the full final report.
- Present findings to key stakeholders in an online meeting at the end of the project.

3. Project Management

3.1 Timings

What are the expected start and end dates for the project? What are the key milestones and dependencies to be aware of?

Anticipated project duration: 11 months

- Start date: 10/02/2025
- End date: 31/12/2025

Opportunities to collect data / test interventions include:

- Plant Health Week (May 2025)
- Gardeners' World Live (June 2025)

The finalised intervention(s) will be launched at Chelsea Flower Show in May 2026.

3.2 Budget

What is your maximum approved budget for this project?

The total budget for both the current and next financial year is up to £100,000 including VAT.

4. Sustainability and Social Value

4.1 Sustainability considerations

Are there any sustainability risks or considerations the supplier needs to know?

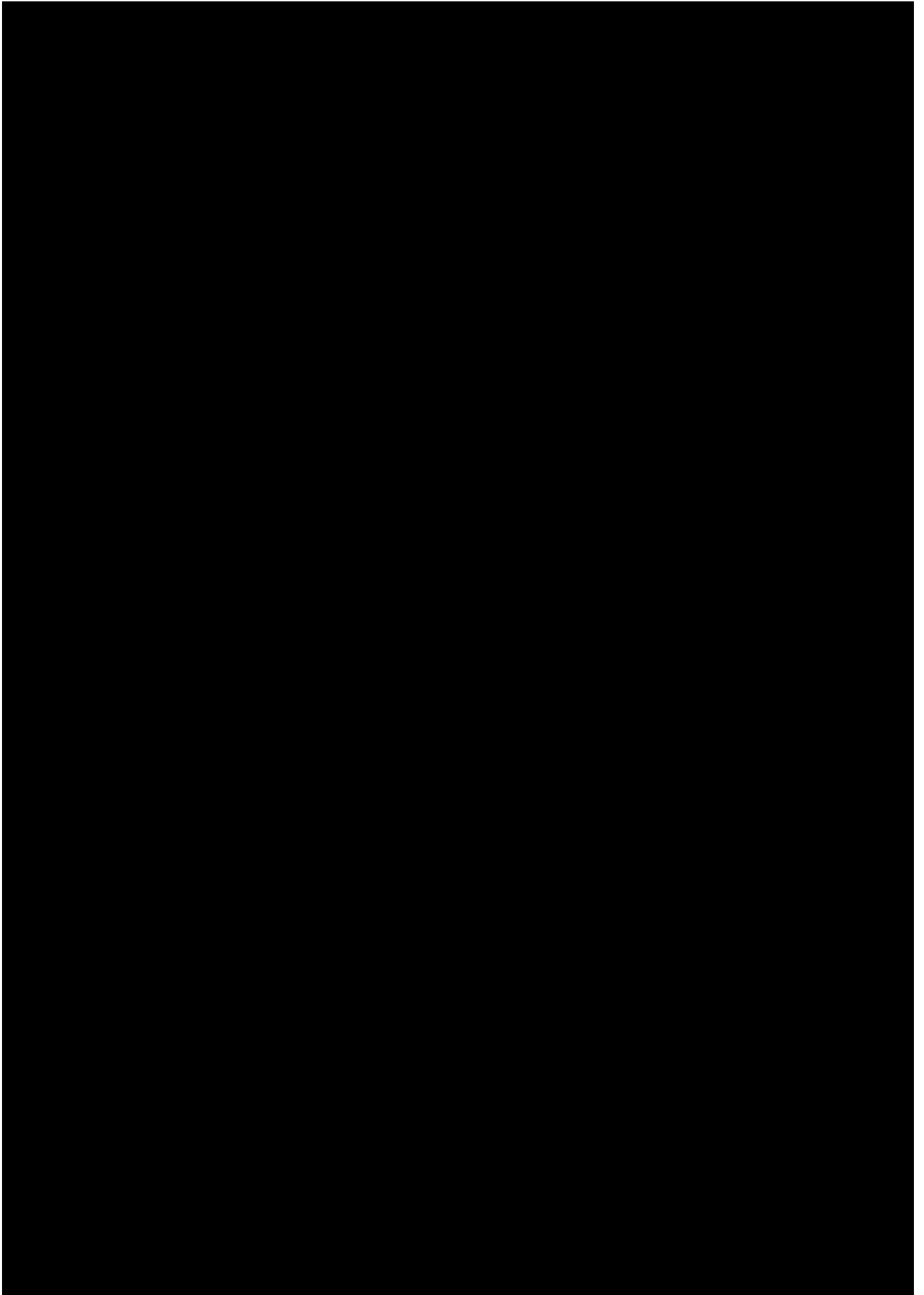
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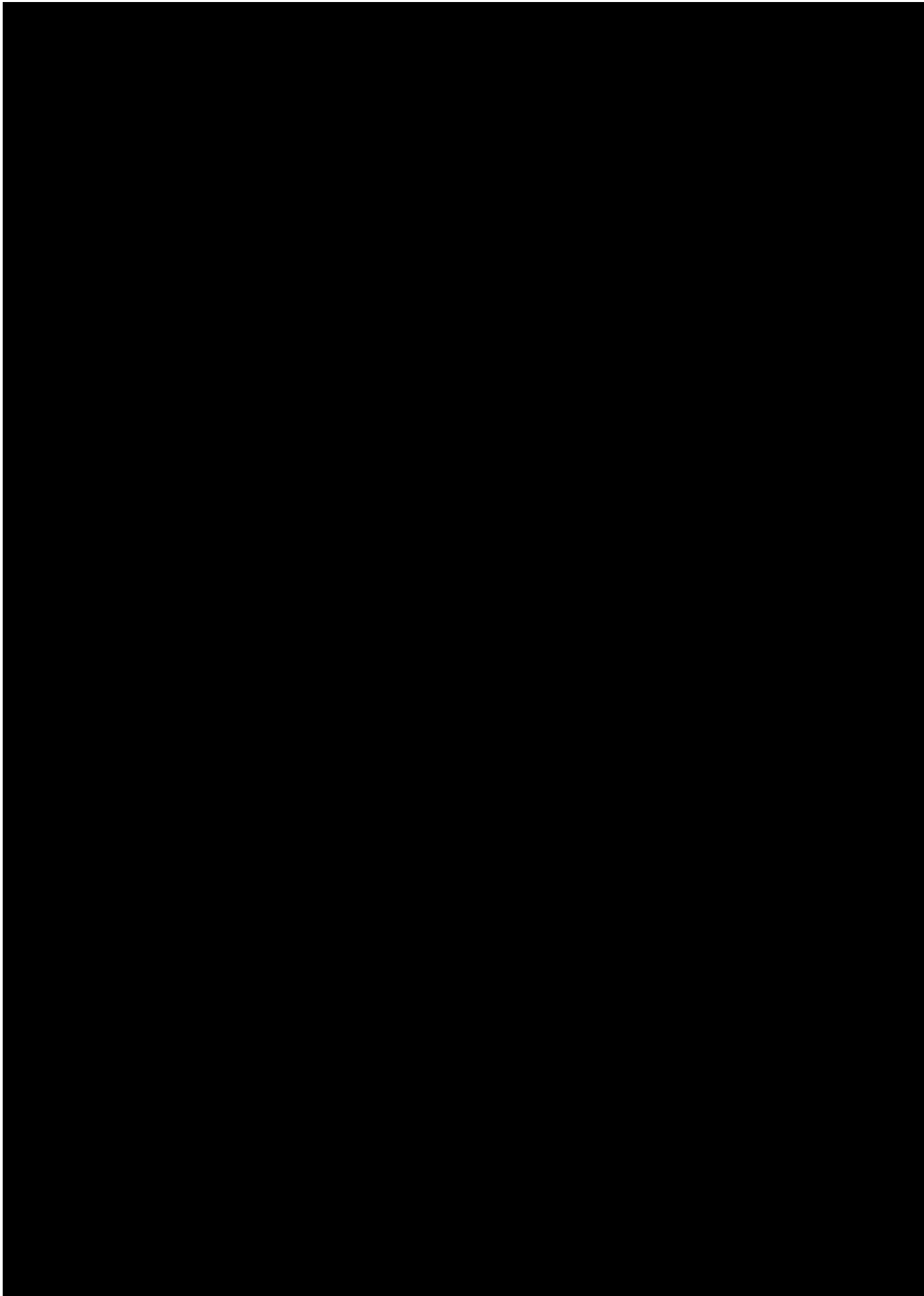
4.2 Social value considerations

Are there any social value risks or considerations the supplier needs to know?

No.

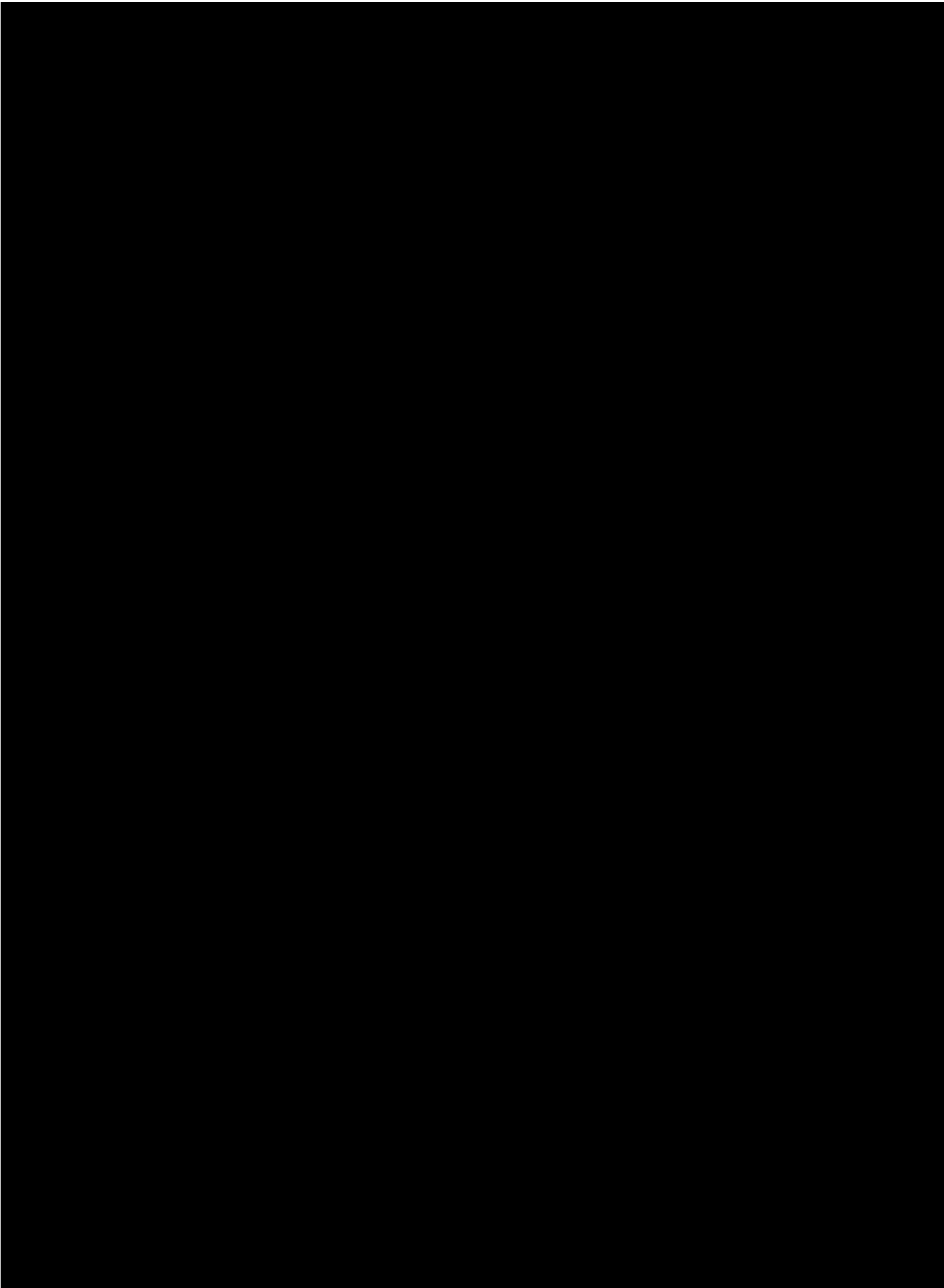
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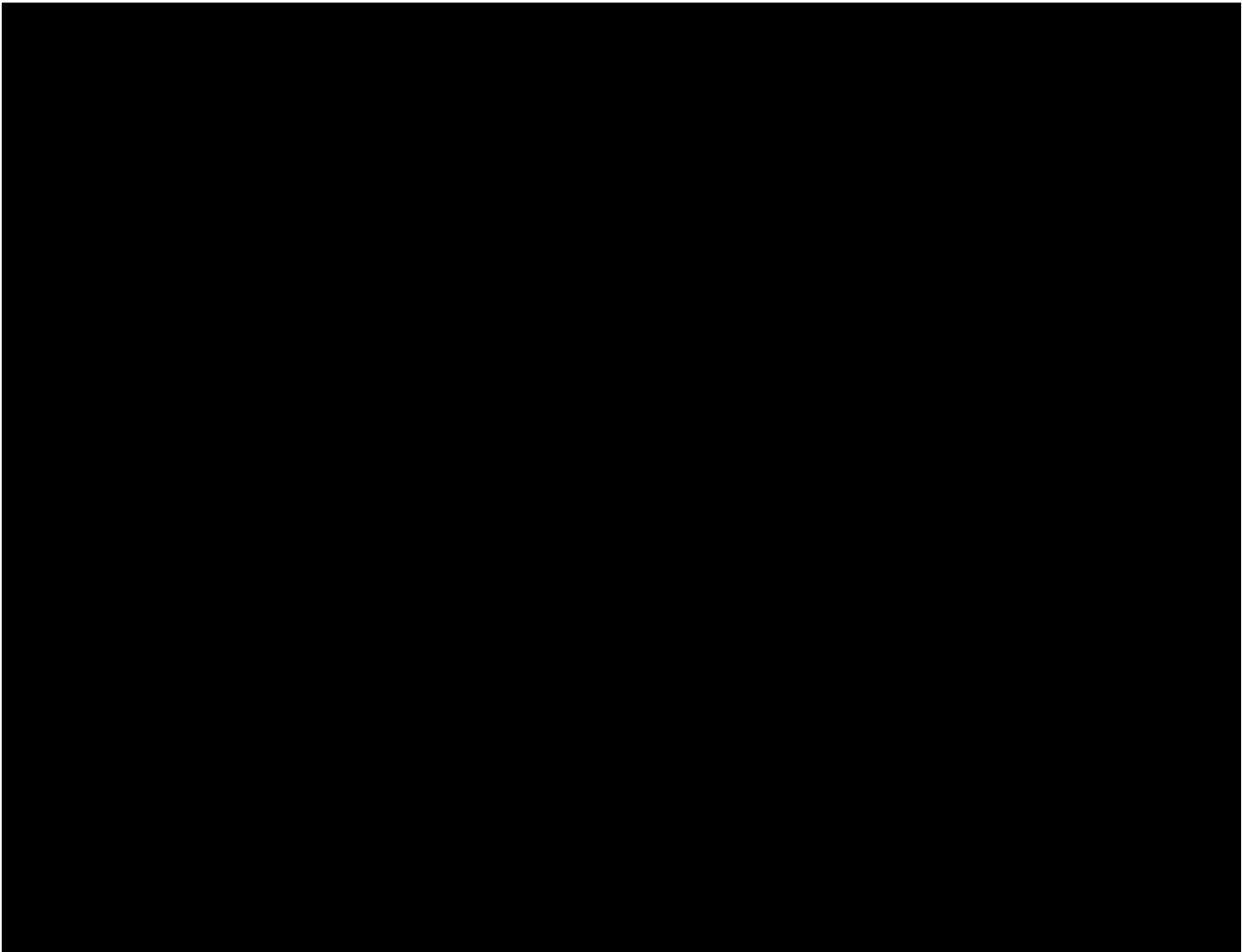


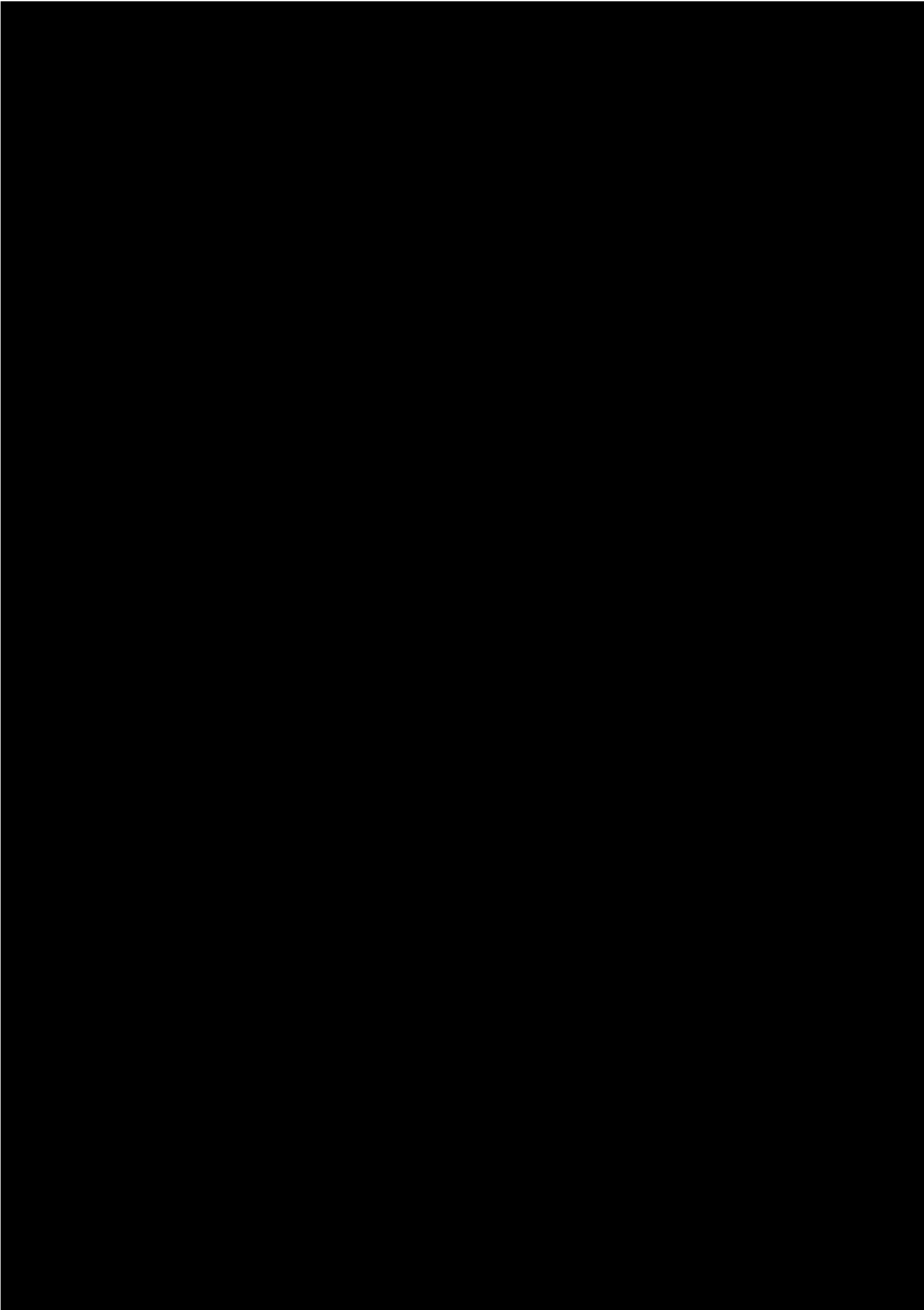


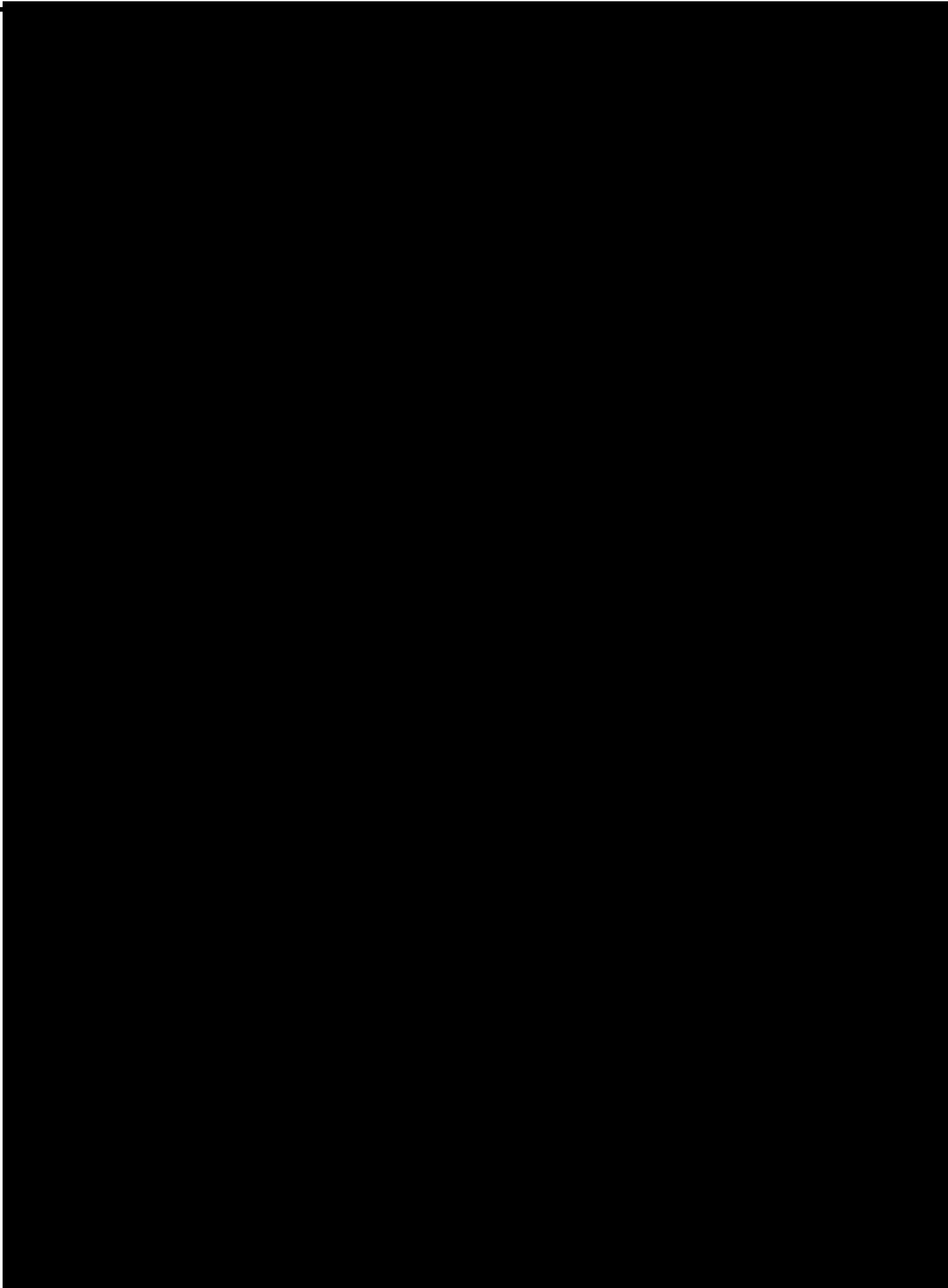


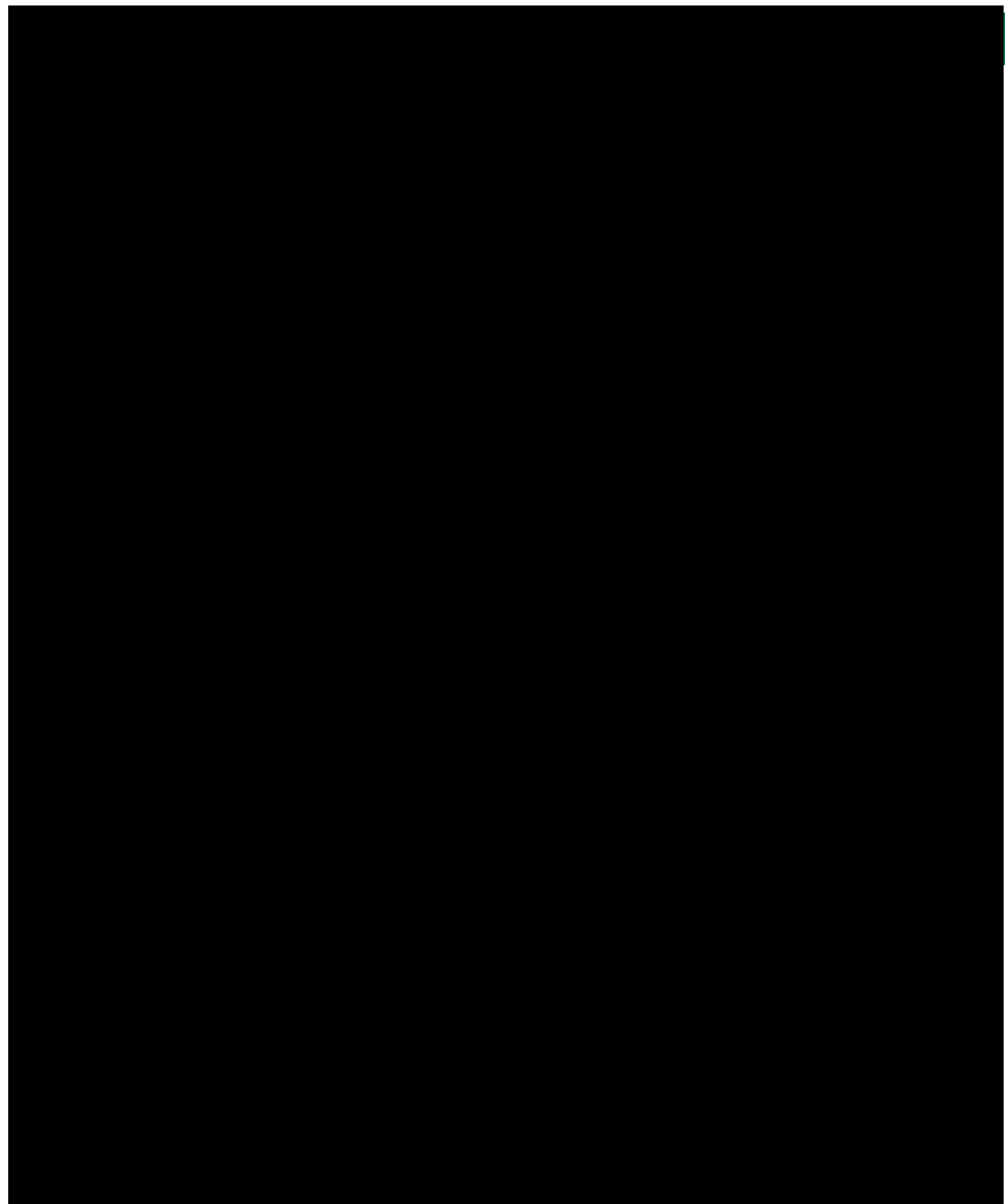
2. Deliverables

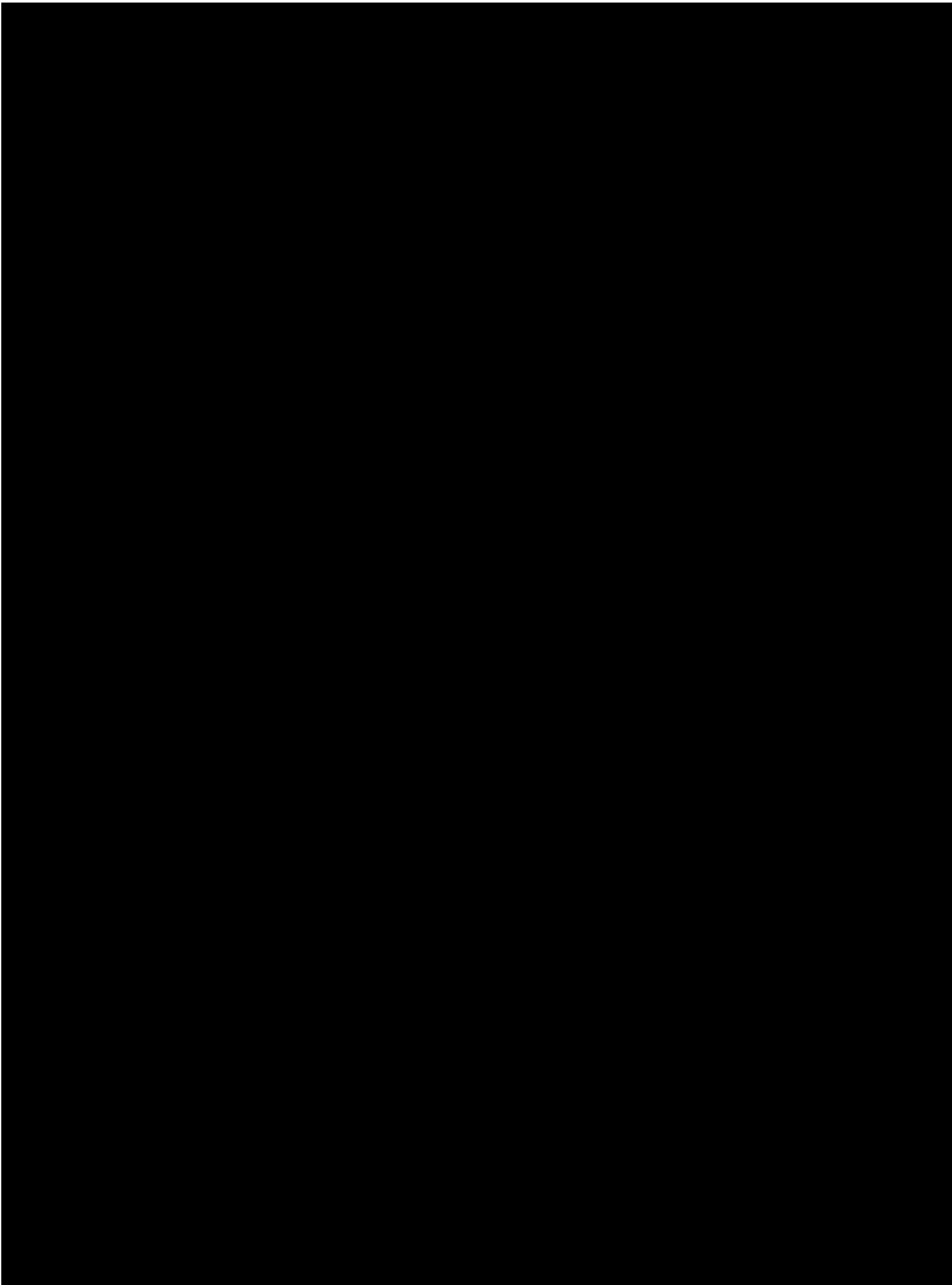
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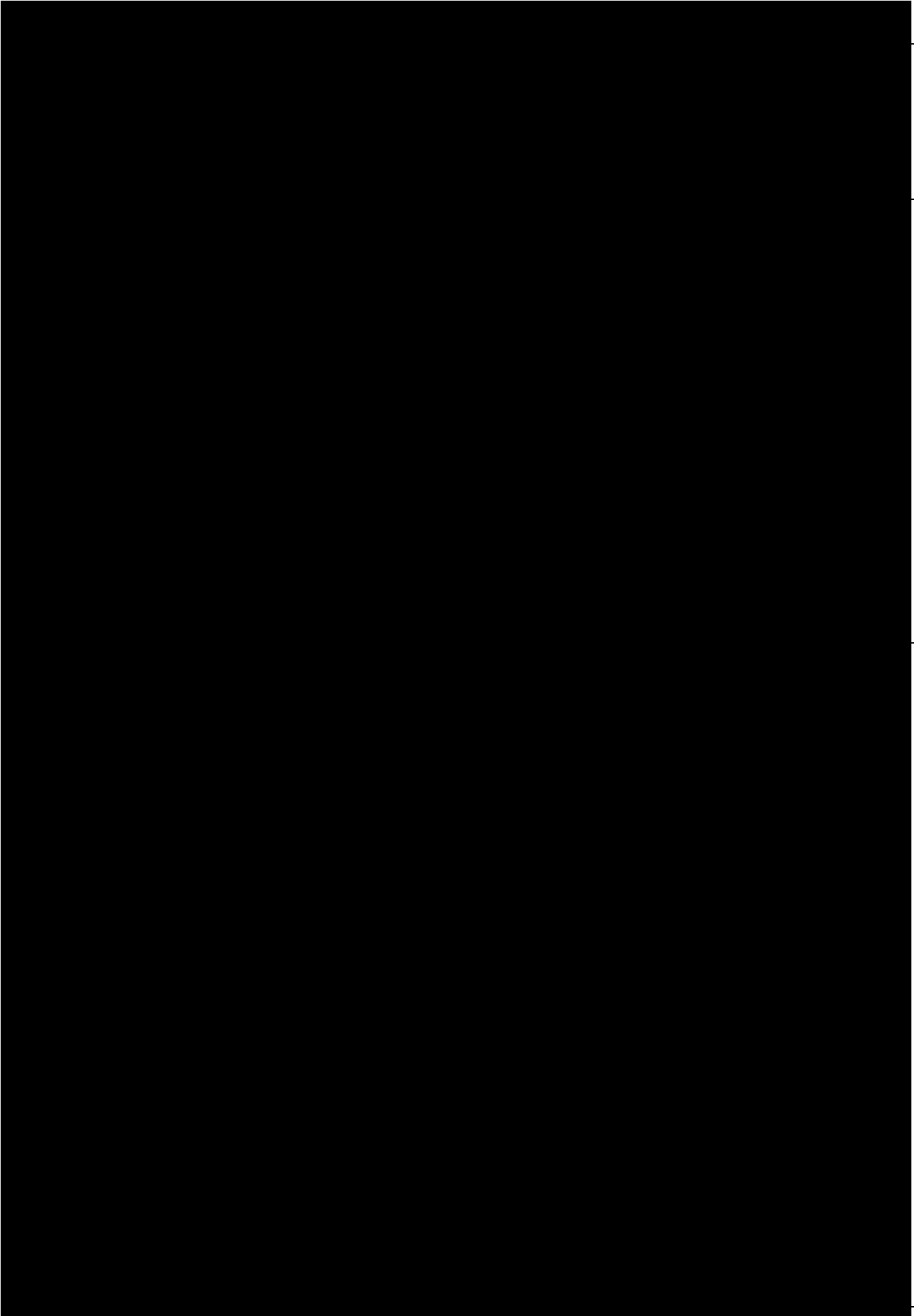












Behavioural Science Call-off Framework

Call-off Form – Order Form

The Contracting Authority: Defra group and business address

The Contractor: Thinks Insight & Strategy

This Order Form is for the provision of the Call-Off Deliverables and dated **06.02.2025**. It is issued under the Behavioural Science Call-off Framework Agreement with **Thinks Insight & Strategy** reference **C27995** specific to the supplier for the provision of **Buying Plant Healthy**.

On agreement of the Proposal, this Order Form should be uploaded to Atamis and signed by Defra Group Commercial and the supplier. When completed and executed by both Parties, this forms a Call-Off Contract.

Call-off Contract incorporated terms: The following documents are incorporated into this Call-Off Contract. If the documents conflict, the following order of precedence applies:

1. Defra's Behavioural Science Call-off Framework Terms and Conditions
2. Specification
3. Proposal

No other Supplier terms are part of the Call-Off Contract. That includes any terms added to this Order Form or presented at the time of delivery.

Call-off contract start date:10/02/2025

Call-off contract expiry date: 31/12/2025

