**Clarifications for Bidders Questions:**

Designing and Producing a State of Natural Capital Report and related communication products

**\*Update 19/10** - please note that the RFQ has been updated to reflect changes to internal deadlines. The deadline for the final drafts of output 4 has been moved from 14/2/24 to 21/2/24.

**Q: We are unclear about the value of the tender. On the contract finder** **site it is listed up to £49,999. On p5 of Request for Quote - SONC Design.docx it states “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.” Given the number of deliverables involved, please could you clarify the value of the tender.**

**Q: Can I please ask to confirm the budget for the project. On GOV.UK, the published budget is £1,000 to £49,999, but in the RFQ document £12,000 is referenced, but it’s not clear to me if that’s the budget so I’d just like to check with you please?**

**Q: Could you please clarify the budget available for this project as we have seen different figures and wish to clarify?**

The maximum value of this contract is £49,999, inclusive of VAT. You can submit any price as long as it is no higher than the maximum value. Please also be aware that 40% of the evaluation criteria is price: the quote you provide.

The section you point out of page 5 refers to the organisation’s transparency publication threshold. If the total estimated value of the contract is equal to or exceeds £12,000 (incl. VAT), we are required to publish an Opportunity Notice to advertise the requirement on Contracts Finder through an open quotation process.

**Q: The workshops and meetings – are these held in person or remote via Teams?**

**Q: Would you prefer the workshop to be remote or in person?**

These workshops/meetings are expected to be held remotely via Microsoft Teams.

**Q: Do you have an approximate or expected word count for the report?**

We are still in the process of writing but based on previous scoping work and existing drafts of some sections, we would expect the report contents to be around 30,000 words. Please be aware this is a rough estimate, however, and may go up or down as we get further along in the writing process. We would advise referring to the draft report structure outlined on pages 14-15 of the RFQ for an idea of the length of the report in pages, and for additional detail on the sections expected to make up the report.

**Q: If we were to submit questions to you over the next coming days, would we need to wait until after the** **20th October to hear back on answers**?

We will try and respond to questions as quickly as possible. This might take a few days depending on whether I need to query the details with different colleagues. Please note that we will also be regularly updating the advert on contracts finder with a document containing (anonymised) questions and responses, to ensure that suppliers have transparency of any additional information provided.

**Q: Can you provide any guidance on how many sectors you would be targeting with your supporting content - which sectors have you covered in previous years?**

As written in page 11 of the RFQ, the main target audience of the SONC is ‘wider government’. This will include policymakers. There is also an important secondary audience in green finance and resource-based industries, and investors/businesses making risk-related decisions.

Internal stakeholder mapping is ongoing, and part of the aim of task 2 will be to draw out key messages that link to different audiences – this may influence the sectors we choose to target with the additional comms/engagement materials.

**Q: Have you got any engagement data/PR coverage from previous years that indicates successful comms and sector reach? Or unsuccessful sector reach that might indicate a new approach required?**

As this is the first SONC report, we do not have any engagement data/PR coverage from previous versions.

**Q: Are there any platforms or target audiences you would specifically like to reach or grow? For instance, a youth sector might engage better with a platform like TikTok.**

We are aiming to reach wider government and policymakers with the SONC report. Rather than general age groups, we expect our sectors to be related to policy areas e.g., business sector, energy sector, transport sector, water sector. These are just indicative examples, however, and internal work on impact and engagement is ongoing.

We are open to comms/engagement materials produced for different types of platforms, assuming reasons are provided to justify why using this platform would prove useful for engaging with a specific sector.

**Q: Are we able to see the last SONC report produced?**

This is the first SONC report, and so we do not have any previous examples to show.

**Q: Is it possible to see an example of the suite of assets produced in the past so we can get an understanding on the design of icons etc.?**

As mentioned above, this is the first SONC report, so we have not previously produced comms/engagement materials to help increase impact and reach. We are expecting the successful supplier to work with us in the initial workshops to unpack the design brief and provide expertise/suggestions on icons.

**Q: How different are elements for segments likely to be – will it be mainly in headlines and executive summaries, or more detailed editing of the main report?**

There will only be one version of the SONC report (produced in output 1). It is the additional comms and engagement materials (produced as part of output 3) that may be produced to target certain sectors. These are expected to be visually engaging summaries/briefings/infographics (the final form(s) to be agreed as part of output 3) communicating key messages relevant for that sector.

**Q: Are we likely to be working with other agencies such as PR?**

We are not anticipating working with external PR agencies, but we are developing a comms plan internally.

**Q: Is the SONC report in partnership with any other organisations in regard to data and findings?**

This report will be produced by the Natural England Natural Capital team, but we are using data from partners including Environment Agency, Defra, JNCC, and CEH. We also have a Project Advisory Group to provide steer on report contents, with members from government departments and public bodies.

**Q: Could we understand the number of stakeholders that would be involved within the creation and sign off process?**

The sign off process will be achieved through the Natural England Natural Capital Team (core delivery team), a Steering Group and Project Advisory Group.

**Q: Beyond illustration, graphs and some animation, would video have to be included in the indicated budget or for specific and re-usable assets would there be scope for incremental budget?**

The maximum value for this contract is £49,999.

The video would have to be included in the indicated budget. The commercial response form should include information on cost per task (the video should be included as part of task 3).

**Q: Are we able to utilise a third-party communications consultant who specialises in Nature Capital reports to support with the key message creation?**

Yes, you can sub-contract, and should aim to include details on any sub-contractors in your responses to the technical questions, and in the price breakdown in the commercial response form.  
   
**Q: On the contracting site it states a budget of between £1,000 - 49,999. Is there a specific budget from NE, or a maximum?**

We are unable to disclose our exact budget, but the maximum value as shown on Contracts Finder is £49,999, inclusive of VAT. You can submit any price as long as it is no higher than the maximum value. Please also be aware that 40% of the evaluation criteria is price: the quote you provide.

**Q: In terms of the design, I am assuming that you would want the report document and the animation to be unified in design?**

Yes, we would like the outputs to share a general unified design/colour palette etc. so that all materials are recognisable as being a part of the same work. Specific aims and design goals for the report and additional materials can be unpacked and discussed as part of the initial design workshops.

**Q: I can see that the 2020 report used a lot of photography. On the assumption of the above questions would proposing a combination of photography and illustration to help match the design of the different mediums be okay or are Natural England wanting to stick to the previous format?**

This is Natural England’s first report on the state of natural capital – there are no previous versions. Other reports (e.g., the 2020 ‘State of Natural Capital Annual Report’ by the Natural Capital Committee) are unrelated to this work, and so we would be looking for the supplier to propose a new format to communicate the content in a visually engaging way.

**Q: Under Output 1, in the request for quotation document, 1B.i states that "The supplier should present multiple visual graphic solutions and design ideas for an indicator dashboard (see undesigned mock-up in annex 4)." apologies if I am missing it but I cannot find the annexes mentioned here or further down this section of the document.**

The annexes can be found as separate attachments on the contracts finder advert [here](https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/587be76d-e200-4412-8599-519e4bbcad42) – annexes 4-7 can be found under ‘More information’ and ‘Attachments’.

**Q: Will NE be writing to text for the report of will you require a copywriter on our side to undertake this?**

The NE Natural Capital team will be writing and supplying the text for the report.

**Q: Is this report a purely digital document or will you be wanting to print it?**

As written in the RFQ, we would like the report to be provided in a print-ready format in addition to a digital version.

**Q: Will need to write any R code from scratch ourselves? We assume this is not needed though as it sounds like NE will provide the datasets in R. Is this assumption correct?**

You will likely not need to write any R code from scratch, as code (R scripts) to produce the template graphics will have been provided. The raw data will also be provided in an excel file, and as CSVs. It is desirable for the R code to be modified to produce the final graphics, so that they are reproducible, but if needs be the graphics can also be modified in other software e.g., Adobe.

**Q: Are you able to provide an alternative link to** [**this**](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https://www.linkedin.com/posts/unep_generationrestoration-activity-7112299763634495488-WFRt?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_ios&data=05%257C01%257CAngharad.Morgan@naturalengland.org.uk%257C629be12901be459d200708dbc0073918%257C770a245002274c6290c74e38537f1102%257C0%257C0%257C638314909494181508%257CUnknown%257CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0=%257C3000%257C%257C%257C&sdata=9hAv36QdX9jiPgHb2HilT0czUnMhEjFypM+VexPwZXo=&reserved=0) **example? It takes us to a restricted page.**

The example video provided can also be found on YouTube here: [Peatlands: Our most efficient carbon sinks are disappearing at an alarming rate - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAzvric3Cqw).

**Q: *It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 4 months to end no later than 28 February 2024. 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 advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.* Can you clarify that payment of 50% project would be billable on completion of outputs 1-3 (estimated on 18/12/23) and 50 % on 14/02/24 (or no later than 28th Feb). If the contract is extended, to include further work, would the original completion date stand? Or would an additional payment date be added/negotiated?**

Yes, 50% of payment would be billable on completion of outputs 1-3, and the remaining 50% would be paid upon receipt of final draft outputs. We are unable to extend the contract end date beyond 28th Feb, but if the contract is extended to include further work, we may be able to negotiate a new payment schedule.

**Q: *3B: ‘Once the package of products has been agreed, the supplier will work with NE to determine a schedule for the provision of written content for these materials’ -* Please can you clarify who will be responsible for the provision of the written materials? Should we include this as possible time required by our copywriter?**

The only written content the supplier will receive is the draft versions of the report (and technical annexes). The additional materials will need to be developed by the supplier and generated from workshops/meetings with the NE project team, plus the key messages lists from task 2. The supplier should be able to support formulating key messages and concise summaries based on the draft report.

**Q: Do you have more information at this stage on who/what are the sector's and stakeholders? Are they different from the audience?**

As written in page 11 of the RFQ, the main target audience of the SONC is ‘wider government’. This will include policymakers. There is also an important secondary audience in green finance and resource-based industries, and investors/businesses making risk-related decisions.

Internal stakeholder mapping is ongoing, and part of the aim of task 2 will be to draw out key messages that link to different audiences – this may influence the sectors we choose to target with the additional comms/engagement materials. We use target sectors and target audiences interchangeably.

**Q: Will the supplied NE Template for the draft report be set up for full accessibility? (In line with NE/DEFRA publication standards).**

The supplied template is largely blank other than some front & back cover styling. The internal page template is a grid based on 4 vertical columns to help ensure consistency. It will be the supplier’s role to ensure the report contents are set out in a way to ensure full accessibility.

**Q: Please may we request Megano font as a short-term non-affiliate licence for use in our application?**

We can supply a short-term non-affiliate licence for the successful supplier for the duration of the contract, to produce the SONC report and materials. The use of Megano is not required for tender submission.

**Q: Can expenses be submitted, if unforeseen/unscoped costs are agreed during the process?**   
**For example, for any stock imagery (photographic or video)?**

No, the contract is to be awarded as a fixed price.

**Q: We wondered if it might be possible to ask for the specific number of the datasets required for the task, the typical size of the datasets, the format they will be provided in and whether all datasets required for the task will be provided.**

There are c200 indicators across 8 broad habitat types and the indicator graphic templates will already contain the relevant data. These will be provided in editable vector format, alongside the R code used to generate them. The raw data will be provided in an excel file, and as CSV’s.

**Q: With regard to the draft report content to be provided by NE as per S.1(b) of the Delivery Table (p.12 of the SONC Design RFQ). What format will this content be provided in, and would it be possible to get an idea of the word count(s) involved for this initial step?**

The draft content will be provided in Microsoft Word. We are still in the process of writing but based on previous scoping work and existing drafts of some sections, we would expect the report contents to be around 30,000 words. Please be aware this is a rough estimate, however, and may go up or down as we get further along in the writing process. We would advise referring to the draft report structure outlined on pages 14-15 of the RFQ for an idea of the length of the report in pages, and for additional detail on the sections expected to make up the report.

**Q: With regard to the facilitation of the internal workshop as per S.2(a) of the Delivery Table, could you please clarify whether this would be expected to take place remotely (such as via Teams or similar) or at NE premises? Could you please further clarify how many meetings/workshops are expected?**

These workshops/meetings are expected to be held remotely via Microsoft Teams. We expect a minimum of 1 design meeting and 1 key messages workshop (in addition to fortnightly progress meetings), but other follow-up meetings may be necessary.

**Q: With regard to S1B.i (Indicator Dashboard). Will the indicator graphic templates generated in R and supplied by NE in editable vector format already contain the relevant data, or will the supplier be expected to analyse the data and use the NE vectors to create the subsequent visualisations?**

The indicator graphic templates will already contain the relevant data. They will be provided in editable vector format, alongside the R code used to generate them. The raw data will also be provided in an excel file, and as CSVs.

**Q: Regarding the data analysis to be undertaken, is it just the analysis of the spreadsheets provided by NE and the dashboards, or would you expect additional predictive analytics methods such as machine learning algorithms to be produced in addition to the dashboards?**

Further analysis of the data is not required but the supplier is required to proposed options for communicating key messages and evidence in a dynamic and engaging way.

**Q: Regarding the dashboards as mentioned in S1B.i, are the dashboards to be produced expected to be designed from the ground up in R, or can the dashboards themselves be created using other proprietary software and incorporate the R graphics?**

The dashboards themselves can be created using R or other proprietary software, depending on supplier judgment and expertise.

**Q: Regarding the additional comms materials discussed in S.3A, will templates be provided by NE for these, as with the provided Adobe InDesign main report template?**

We are expecting the suppliers to produce their own proposals and mock-ups for the additional comms materials, rather than using existing NE templates.

**Q: Does NE have an image / footage library that we would be able to review, or are you expecting new imagery to be sourced from libraries or commissioned specifically for this project?**

NE does have a Flickr account and the team are currently sourcing new images. The contractor will be able to review these. We also have a YouTube video channel that footage maybe available from. The supplier may therefore wish to include in their submission the procurement of additional images/footage. If you do commission a third party or sub-contract the gathering of images/ footage, you should aim to include details on any sub-contractors in your responses to the technical questions, and in the price breakdown in the commercial response form.

**Q: For the report document, should we allow for one round of proof-reading (as suggested in 4A)? We would normally complete a proof-read, then supply suggestions and/or questions which would be discussed and implemented. Then we would do a further proof-read to ensure agreements were complete.**

4A asks for the report to be proof-read. The supplier can advise us of their process for carrying this out and ensure this is detailed in the tender submission.

**Q: Are we allowed to set out our response in our own document layout, as long as each section clearly relates to the brief?**

Tenderers should provide answers that meet the criteria of each technical question as set out in pages 24, 25 and 26 of the RFQ, but this can be set out in any document layout or format.

The commercial response should involve a completed commercial response form (template included as part of the opportunity notice on contracts finder).

**Q: Technical question, but if we’re submitting the tender response by email, our PDF response might be a relatively large file size. Do you know if NE have any limits on email attachment sizes?**

The maximum email attachment size is 10 MB. If your tender response is larger and you therefore need to use a file sharing site, please inform the NE project manager of the exact file name and size and the time the file will be uploaded.

**Q: Base copy: what format will this be supplied in?**

The draft content will be provided in Microsoft Word.

**Q: Additional copy requirements: we would assume from your brief that base copy supplied will require proofing and possible light edits/ checking consistency with the guidelines you have shared, but please specify if there is any further support anticipated e.g., rewriting or fact checking.**

Proofreading is expected, however no further support (rewriting or fact checking) will be needed.

**Q: Will any base visual assets be supplied e.g., graphics/ imagery/ icons? Or should all visual graphics to be produced and imagery to be sourced via stock imagery?**

Visual graphics should be produced (exact designs and goals to be discussed during initial design meetings). The NE team will be supplying some imagery to use in the report; however, the supplier may choose to include additional image sourcing as part of their submission.

**Q: Do you have a preferred delivery process for content files (eg, all WIP and Final files)?**

We will explore the option of saving content files in a shared SharePoint Online (SPOL) folder.

**Q: Are you able to share any further details on the ‘standalone additional communication and engagement materials’:**

1. **How many policy summaries will be required? And what is the expected word count for each?**
2. **How many ‘single pack sector specific infographics’ are expected to be created?**
3. **Can you share any further details on the format or length of this ‘How to use this report’ guide?**
4. **Can you share any further details on ‘slide decks’ required e.g. slide count, word count and how many are needed?**

We do not yet have specific details on the number/length of the additional communication and engagement details. Following initial design meetings and key message workshops, the NE team and supplier will agree on a set of additional materials to be produced, and the number of target sectors for the sector-specific materials.