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Contract

Collaboration on EXPLORE project Outcome Measures

NATURAL ENGLAND

UK7: Contract details notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2026/S 000-000076

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05fed4

Published 2 January 2026, 3:48pm

Scope

Reference

C32097

Description

This agreement has a value of £45,000 and is between Natural England and the University of Exeter, to support the development of EXPLORE. The contract will run from the 30th November 2025 until the 31st March 2027.

EXPLORE is a fully developed IT solution to support strategic decision-making by local authorities. It uses health, wellbeing, nature and sustainability as the common targets for almost all local government work. It has been codeveloped with local authorities, and will be published in Spring 2026. EXPLORE has four domains. These represent the final outcomes from almost all local authority activity and are Health, Wellbeing, Nature and Sustainability. To support Local Authorities in planning for these domains EXPLORE has three components. These are OUTCOME MEASURES (quantitative measure of current progress in each domain), FACTOR MAPS (diagrams show most of the things which influence outcomes) and HORIZON SCANNING. EXPLORE will support Local Authorities

to do rapid and holistic planning supporting the government's development agenda.

Under the Procurement Act 2023, this direct award is justified as 'due to an absence of competition for technical reasons and provided there are no reasonable alternatives, only a particular supplier can supply the goods, services or works required'.

This is because the University of Exeter have been a key partner throughout the development of EXPLORE, through RENEW (A Natural Environment Research Council-funded project, which NE participates within). EXPLORE is built into theme 2 of RENEW. Key academic stakeholders have collaborated on the digital dashboards and other web-based components with Natural England and have the necessary expertise to ensure that the EXPLORE web-based components will be successfully delivered. Therefore, they are best placed to take over from the current supplier with regards to managing and keeping the web-based product up to date.

Additionally, given the nature of this procurement (i.e. below the Procurement Act threshold of £139,688), this is a below threshold STA and therefore is compliant with PA23.

Contract 1. Collaboration on EXPLORE Project Outcome Measures

Supplier

- [University of Exeter](#)

Contract value

- £45,000 excluding VAT
- £54,000 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

Date signed

30 November 2025

Contract dates

- 1 December 2025 to 31 March 2027
- 1 year, 4 months

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 73110000 - Research services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Procedure

Procedure type

Below threshold - without competition

Supplier

University of Exeter

The Queen's Drive

Exeter

EX4 4QJ

United Kingdom

Email: a.r.huke@exeter.ac.uk

Region: UKK43 - Devon CC

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. Collaboration on EXPLORE Project Outcome Measures

Contracting authority

NATURAL ENGLAND

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PJDG-6588-XDMM

Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

United Kingdom

Email: izabella.roberts@defra.gov.uk

Website: <https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome>

Region: UKI32 - Westminster

Organisation type: Public authority - central government