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Planning

PFAS Risk Screening Project (Phase 4)

Defra Network eTendering Portal

F01: Prior information notice
Prior information only
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Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

Defra Network eTendering Portal

17 Nobel House

London

SW1P 3JR

Contact

Leonie Cormac

Email

Leonie.cormac@defra.gov.uk

Telephone

+44 2072385921

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

UK - United Kingdom

Internet address(es)

Main address

www.defra.bravosolution.co.uk

I.2) Information about joint procurement

The contract is awarded by a central purchasing body

I.3) Communication

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

National or federal Agency/Office

I.5) Main activity

Environment

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

PFAS Risk Screening Project (Phase 4)

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 90713000 - Environmental issues consultancy services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

The overarching PFAS Risk Screening Project, now in its fourth phase, aims to assess and tackle the risks arising from a group of “forever chemicals” which are contaminating soil, groundwater and surface waters and pose a risk to human health.

In order to ensure effective mitigation actions are appropriately targeted, we need to better understand the sources of PFAS, and the pathways by which these chemicals can impact key receptors.

Previous phases of the project have led to the development of a high-level risk screening model. This layered GIS model helps to identify potential problem zones across England using a multi-criteria analytical approach to evaluate risk. The model allocates scores based on respective weightings applied to key criteria – all designed around the source-pathway-receptor type strategy.

Based on the outputs of the model, and our growing understanding of the nature and extent of the PFAS problem, under Phase 4 we intend to focus in on specific facilities and zones of concern to both validate the model and target resource.

Phase 4 will be divided into five Lots and suppliers are invited to bid for one, several or all of the Lots. A single contract will be awarded for each Lot and each Lot will be evaluated independently from each other.

The Environment Agency has secured funding to deliver this work over the next three financial years. It is anticipated that some of the Lots will have a clear start and end date, whilst others will be dependent on findings, which may lead to additional tasks being required. We will therefore be requesting a fixed cost to deliver the Year 1 work defined in the Specification for each Lot and fixed rates which will be used to deliver subsequent work should it be required.

It is anticipated that work under Phase 4 Contracts will begin at the end of August 2022. Each Lot has an estimated timeline for completion as indicated below.

Lot 1 – 12 months

Lot 2 – 12 months with option to extend into Years 2 and 3 depending on outputs and recommendations

Lot 3 – 12 months with option to extend into Year 2

Lot 4 – 12 months with option to extend into Years 2 and 3 depending on outputs and recommendations

Lot 5 – 12 months with option to extend into Year 2

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £3,000,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: Yes

Maximum number of lots that may be awarded to one tenderer: 5

The contracting authority reserves the right to award contracts combining the following lots or groups of lots:

Lot 1. Development of Good Practice Guidance

Lot 2. Detailed Assessment of Potential PFAS Problem Sites:

Lot 3. Economic Appraisal

Lot 4. Landfill Assessment:

Lot 5. Background Concentrations in Soil

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Development of Good Practice Guidance

Lot No

1

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 90700000 - Environmental services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Lot 1: To develop a guide aimed at those involved in the regulation of sites of concern due to the impact, or potential impact, from PAS and associated chemicals. Acting as a reference guide which staff can refer to when faced with sites highlighted under voluntary schemes, regulatory regimes, or pollution incidents. Providing background to the problem, the nature and characteristics of these chemicals, and the tailored approach necessary to best assess the risk, apply regulatory controls and ultimately implement mitigation measures (if necessary). A step-by-step guide adopting the classic land contamination evaluation approach indicating how at each stage of site assessment, the site evaluation strategy should be conducted when considering contaminants of this nature.

To collaborate and share information with the other tasks under Phase 4 and link back to the outputs and conclusions from preceding phases.

II.2.14) Additional information

Suppliers may bid for one, several or all the Lots. All Lots will be evaluated independently.

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Detailed Assessment of Potential PFAS Problem Sites

Lot No

2

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 90700000 - Environmental services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Lot 2: To focus on sites of concern that have been highlighted by the GIS model developed under previous project phases or identified independently by colleagues. To progress a number of desk-based site assessments utilizing all available information, both internally and from wider external research. Aiming to deliver a comprehensive independent desk study report for each the highlighted sites providing background context, assessment of the evidence base, development of a robust conceptual site

model, and recommendations for further, potentially more in-depth or site-based investigation. It is likely that any subsequent site evaluation will be conducted under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and so the approach adopted for site evaluation should follow Part 2A procedures.

In addition to desk-based site assessment activities mentioned above, we have already built-up sufficient evidence on a number of particular sites to justify on-site investigation works. Under Lot 2 we are seeking a specialist consultancy to deliver an intrusive site investigation on one of these highlighted sites, to further refine the conceptual site model and deliver conclusions under the Part 2A regulatory regime. Whilst PFAS are the primary contaminants of concern, in accordance with Part 2A, all potential contaminant linkages should be thoroughly evaluated.

To collaborate and share information with the other tasks under Phase 4 and link back to the outputs and conclusions from preceding phases.

II.2.14) Additional information

Suppliers may bid for one, several or all the Lots. All Lots will be evaluated independently.

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Economic Appraisal

Lot No

3

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 90700000 - Environmental services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Lot 3: To build on the outputs of Phase 3 which, utilizing the results generated by the GIS model, aimed to categorise and quantify the number of potential problem PFAS sites across England. To assess the recommendations from this Phase 3 task, and develop an approach and ultimately deliver a report, detailing the nature of the PFAS problem across

the Country together will a mechanism for deriving costs to highlight the financial scale and burden of the problem.

To collaborate and share information with the other tasks under Phase 4 and link back to the outputs and conclusions from preceding phases.

II.2.14) Additional information

Suppliers may bid for one, several or all the Lots. All Lots will be evaluated independently.

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Landfill Assessment

Lot No

4

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 90700000 - Environmental services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Lot 4: Phase 3 included an extensive monitoring exercise for water and leachate from a wide variety of landfill facilities. This ran in parallel with a DEFRA initiated landfill study. The aim was to assess PFAS and wider POPs generation and potential release into the environment. Lot 4 aims to build on this work and focus in on specific emissions from landfills to ascertain key release mechanisms for this family of chemicals. The sub tasks under Lot 4 include:

• Assessment of pre and post treated leachate to evaluate PFAS component

o Some studies have shown that on-site treatment can have little or no effect on PFAS substances within leachate. These leachates are then discharged to either sewage or wastewater treatment works either by direct sewer connection or tanker transfer. This study aims to assess pre and post treatment concentrations and what levels are making their way to treatment works. It will involve sampling from key locations at a pre-selected

number of landfill facilities and the receiving water treatment works.

• Assessment of sludges produced and POPs component

o Whilst PFAS can remain largely untreated by on-site treatment facilities, many POPs are removed and most likely end up in the resulting sludges. The relative proportion is unknown. And the risk from this contaminant loading to environmental media from disposal of these sludges is also unknown. This study aims to provide additional detail by sampling the sludges from a number of landfill treatment plants and at either the point of disposal or at other intermediate treatment facilities to quantify the mass of particular POPs being released to the environment (e.g. via land spreading) and/or being destroyed at other treatment facilities.

• Assessment of POPs release into GW from older unlined facilities

o This task aims to assess whether PFAS and/or other POPs are being released to the environment via contaminant migration from unlined older (dilute and disperse) landfills into the underlying and surrounding groundwaters (and/or surface waters). The task would involve sampling of the raw leachate and groundwater both up and down hydraulic gradient of the landfill site.

• Study of PFAS in gaseous emissions

o This sub task aims to qualify / quantify the potential release of PFAS in trace gases released at landfills from the combustion gas treatment systems (landfill engines and flares) and gasses passively venting from the landfill itself. The task will involve sampling from various key locations likely to include: Raw gas at the well head or manifold; sampling the gas condensate within the gas collection pipework; sampling the soils downwind of the combustion treatment plant and beyond the landfill site boundary; and, sampling of the waste oils and slippage combustion products from the gas engine.

To collaborate and share information with the other tasks under Phase 4 and link back to the outputs and conclusions from preceding phases.

II.2.14) Additional information

Suppliers may bid for one, several or all the Lots. All Lots will be evaluated independently.

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Background Concentrations in Soil

Lot No

5

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 90700000 - Environmental services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Lot 5: Whilst more information is becoming available on PFAS and related substances in the water environment (groundwater and surface water) there is still little information on background PFAS levels within the soil environment. In order to assess the scale of the problem, to develop a countrywide picture, and to help evaluate risk, a comprehensive study of background concentrations is considered necessary. This would be conducted in collaboration with the British Geological Society (BGS) as a sub-contractor to the main Contractor, who would help facilitate mapping, provide geological context and potentially access to archived soil samples. It is currently anticipated that this task would include widespread soil sampling from a representative range of environments.

To collaborate and share information with the other tasks under Phase 4 and link back to the outputs and conclusions from preceding phases.

II.2.14) Additional information

Suppliers may bid for one, several or all the Lots. All Lots will be evaluated independently.

II.3) Estimated date of publication of contract notice

15 June 2022

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.3) Additional information

The Environment Agency project team would like to invite interested suppliers to join an Early Market Engagement session, in order to share an overview of the Specification and gather feedback on specific elements of the work, which will help shape our requirement. If you are interested in participating in this event, please email leonie.cormac@defra.gov.uk by Monday 23/05/22 (12:00). A maximum of two participants from each organisation may join the event. The event will be held virtually through Microsoft Teams and is scheduled for 10:00 – 11:00 on Tuesday 24th May 2022. Please note, the call will be recorded and transcribed, with the intention that a copy of the transcription will be shared with interested parties who are unable to attend the event.