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Tender

## **CEFAS26-14 Marine benthic macroinvertebrate analysis of samples MCZ**

CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SCIENCE

UK4: Tender notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-065e2e

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### **Scope**

### **Reference**

C33269

### **Description**

Cefas and Natural England (NE) have been working collaboratively to deliver monitoring surveys within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as part of the ongoing MPA programme. These surveys aim to support Natural England's monitoring objectives and provide robust evidence to inform conservation measures.

Located 35 km off the east coast of England, Kentish Knock East Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is in the outer Thames Estuary. As part of the Marine Protected Area Program, Cefas and Natural England collected sediment samples within and surrounding the site using a 0.1m<sup>2</sup> mini Hamon grab during a survey aboard the RV Cefas Endeavour during November 2025. A total of 120 samples were successfully collected from four Case Study Areas (30 grabs per CSA) in November and December surveys (see Annex 1). The samples were preserved in formaldehyde shortly after sampling, and all containers have both an internal and external label, clearly indicating the survey and station information.

## Requirement:

The Supplier is required to process 120 macrofaunal samples: to extract and identify all biota retained following sieving on a 1.0 mm capture mesh, as per the NE Atlantic Marine Biological Analytical Quality Control (NMBAQC) guidelines detailing extraction and identification protocols (NMBAQC scheme - APEM). In addition to this there is a requirement to ensure these data are audited as per the NMBAQC Own Samples protocol prior to submission to Cefas (NMBAQC scheme - APEM).

Enumeration, identification and biomassing to the lowest possible taxonomic level must be carried out following the NMBAQC Processing Requirement Protocol and Taxonomic Discrimination Protocol (NMBAQC scheme - APEM). Biomass (wet weight in grams to at least 4 d.p.) is required for all enumerable taxa. Balances must be serviced annually and a valid service certificate must be supplied with this tender. Taxa list from previous surveys can be given on request or can be accessed via the One Benthic portal .

No formal reference collection is needed for this project, but selected reference specimens will be requested by Cefas to be returned to the laboratories in Lowestoft in an appropriate preservation liquid (i.e. 100% IDA or 70% IMS, 20% water and 10% glycerol). Notable taxa must be highlighted here such as non-native species and new or unusual records. Non-native species must be added to the Non-native Species Information Portal (NNSIP) (hosted on the Non-native Species Secretariat website, GB Non Native Species Information Portal (GBNNSIP) - providing records and alerts for non-native species in Great Britain | InfraPortal).

The abundance and biomass data matrices must be sent via email (email address to be confirmed by Cefas on contract implementation) following completion. All species names must be run through the WoRMS 'Match Taxa' tool so that all naming is current (<http://www.marinespecies.org/aphia.php?p=match>).

## Quality assurance (QA):

10% of samples from this contract are to be subject to an independent QA process following the requirements of the NMBAQC 'own sample' scheme assessment criteria with the scheme coordinator (or their assigned Audit Quality Control laboratory (AQC)) (see above). As this is also a project level audit the full data set will be quality assured; in addition to the samples selected to assess processing, additional taxa will be identified for review from the full data matrix. Any remedial action required following the AQC process must be completed within an agreed timeframe at no extra cost to the project, including any subsequent AQC needed.

The AQC contract will be arranged and paid for by Cefas. The processing and audit laboratories will include Cefas in all communications relating to this contract and will work to ensure timely delivery.

## Reporting

All grab sample analyses need to be entered into Marine Recorder Online and any import spreadsheets to be delivered with the final reports. Natural England will arrange system logins to Marine Recorder Online for the awarded Supplier to use. Guidance 'Marine Recorder Guidance for Contractors' will also be provided.

The Intellectual Property Rights and Copyright of all data and outputs (including photographs) will be owned jointly by Cefas and Natural England. All data will be made available by Cefas and Natural England under the Open Government Licence at the end of the project.

### Deliverables:

- Externally audited, quality-controlled abundance and biomass matrices with current nomenclature (Primary processing and Audit lab) – spreadsheet and evidence that it has been upload on Marine Recorder Online according to the guidelines.
- Selected Reference specimens (Primary processing lab)
- Internal Quality Control logs (Primary processing lab)
- Audited Quality Control report (Audit lab)
- Weekly project summary updates and correspondence between primary processing and audit lab (Primary processing and Audit lab)F

### Delivery Dates:

1. Primary analysis to be completed by end 4th September 2026
2. Fully AQC'd data to be completed by end 2nd October 2026 and upload on Marine Recorder by end 16th October 2026
3. Agreed list of reference specimens to be returned to Cefas by 16th October 2026

Quantity: 120 mini Hamon grab samples (details of the samples can be found in Annex 1 below).

Location: Samples are available for collection by the successful Supplier as soon as possible following Contract signature, from the storage facility in Lowestoft – Cefas, Pakefield Road, NR33 0HT (costs to be included in tender as per RFQ Part 2 – Pricing). Details of the sample collection are to be confirmed following contract allocation and samples must be transported safely and securely.

### **Total value (estimated)**

- £83,333.33 excluding VAT
- £100,000 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

### **Contract dates (estimated)**

- 20 April 2026 to 16 October 2026
- Possible extension to 16 April 2027
- 11 months, 27 days

Description of possible extension:

The Buyer may extend the Contract for a period of up to 6 Months by giving not less than 10 Working Days' notice in writing to the Supplier prior to the Expiry Date. The Conditions of the Contract shall apply throughout any such extended period.

### **Main procurement category**

Services

### **CPV classifications**

- 71620000 - Analysis services
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## **Participation**

### **Conditions of participation**

As per bidder pack

### **Particular suitability**

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
  - Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)
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## **Submission**

### **Enquiry deadline**

18 March 2026, 12:00pm

### **Tender submission deadline**

24 March 2026, 12:00pm

### **Submission address and any special instructions**

Download the Bidder Pack at <https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome> and search for CEFAS26-14 Marine benthic macroinvertebrate analysis of samples MCZ

**Tenders may be submitted electronically**

Yes

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## Award criteria

<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Quality	Quality	70.00%
Pricing	Price	20.00%
Social Value	Quality	10.00%

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## Procedure

### Procedure type

Below threshold - open competition

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## Contracting authority

### **CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SCIENCE**

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PPGW-5299-JGTN

Pakefield Road

Lowestoft

NR33 0HT

United Kingdom

Email: [procure@cefas.gov.uk](mailto:procure@cefas.gov.uk)

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

Region: UKH14 - Suffolk

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government