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Planning

Ship Refit Contract RRS Discovery & RRS James Cook

National Oceanography Centre

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-055122

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-0596f1 ([view related notices](#))

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Scope

Reference

NOCP00561

Description

The National Oceanography Centre (NOC) intends to procure a contract for the refit, maintenance, and upgrade of the research vessels RRS Discovery and RRS James Cook. The estimated annual value of the contract is £1.5 million. The contract is essential to ensure both vessels remain fit for purpose, compliant with Classification Society and Flag State regulations, and capable of supporting world-class scientific operations.

The proposed contract will be a fixed-period agreement with a single supplier for all refit works, maintenance, and upgrades required to maintain operational capability.

Depending on the outcome of soft market testing and market feedback, NOC may extract the immediate Discovery refit window (March-April 2026) from the main contract and accelerate this element using the accelerated open procedure under section 20(2)(a) of the Procurement Act 2023, with time limits set proportionately in accordance with section

54 (Time limits). The remainder of the contract will be procured using the standard open procedure as set out in section 20(2)(a). Any decision to split or accelerate the procurement will be made proportionately and in compliance with the Act.

Total value (estimated)

- £1,500,000 excluding VAT
- £1,800,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 16 January 2026 to 15 January 2027
- Possible extension to 15 January 2029
- 3 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 50240000 - Repair, maintenance and associated services related to marine and other equipment

Engagement

Engagement deadline

15 September 2025

Engagement process description

As part of this market engagement, NOC is seeking reassurance from suppliers regarding the current risks associated with the immediate refit of RRS Discovery, scheduled for March-April 2026. The Capability Assessment will be issued to known suppliers, and any other interested parties may request a copy from NOC. The purpose is to confirm supplier availability and capacity to deliver the required works within the specified window and to understand any constraints or risks that may affect participation.

Supplier responses will help NOC determine whether the immediate refit window presents valid risks that justify accelerating this element of the procurement using the accelerated open procedure under section 20(2)(a) and section 54 of the Procurement Act 2023. This process forms part of preliminary market engagement under sections 16-17 of the Act and does not constitute a call for competition. Participation is voluntary and does not affect eligibility to take part in any future procurement.

To request a copy of the Capability Assessment, please email tenders@noc.ac.uk quoting reference NOCP00561. Completed responses must be returned by email to the same address no later than 12:00 (UK time) on 15 September 2025.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Contracting authority

National Oceanography Centre

- Companies House: 11444362
- Charity Commission (England and Wales): 1185265
- Scottish Charity Register: SC049896
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PYLV-3456-PMCQ

National Oceanography Centre

Southampton

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Region: UKJ32 - Southampton

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government