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Award

Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA, including Postmortem Examinations

Animal and Plant Health Agency

UK5: Transparency notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-070033

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05d7d4

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Scope

Description

The provision of a diagnostic Postmortem Examination (PME) service of animals and the collection of surveillance data as part of an integrated network to support PME sites of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) in England and Wales.

Contract 1. Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA

Suppliers (8)

- ABERYSTWYTH ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY LTD
- SRUC
- THE ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE
- UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
- UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
- UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL
- UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM (THE)
- UNIVERSITY OF SURREY(THE)

Contract value

- £1,250,000 excluding VAT
- £1,500,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Earliest date the contract will be signed

28 November 2025

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2028
- Possible extension to 31 December 2030
- 5 years

Description of possible extension:

The Authority may extend the contract to the extension end date by providing at least 20 working days' notice.

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 85200000 - Veterinary services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Other information

Description of risks to contract performance

APHA currently envisages that the following risks could jeopardise the satisfactory performance of the contracts:

Alterations in governmental policy or legislative frameworks, beyond APHA's jurisdiction, may adversely affect the operation and continuity of the requirement.

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Direct award

Direct award justification

Single supplier - technical reasons

APHA is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs ("Defra") with responsibility for disease surveillance to identify new and re-emerging threats to animal health and welfare and public health. APHA fulfils this function through (i) statutory surveillance, by monitoring and collecting notifiable and reportable disease information and (ii) scanning surveillance, through the voluntary submission and collection of information by private vets enabling the early detection of new and re-emerging disease threats. Veterinary Investigation Centres ("VICs") provide PME and surveillance data to APHA, but their limited geographical coverage and operational capacity require APHA to procure supplementary service provision from the listed suppliers to ensure comprehensive PME services and data surveillance across England and Wales.

The services to be provided by the suppliers under the contract include (but are not limited to):

- conducting postmortem examinations of animal carcasses with the objective of diagnosing disease;

- collecting and reporting data from PME and disease investigations of animals for the purpose of accumulating disease surveillance intelligence;
- alerting APHA to suspicions of notifiable disease, New or Re-emerging disease Threats ("NRT") and animal welfare issues;
- participating in a network of veterinary staff with experience in animal disease investigation, diagnosis and pathology, and engaging in government surveillance for potential NRT in animals; and
- engaging in daily discussions with private veterinary surgeons about disease incidents where specialist advice is needed.

Five of the suppliers have been providing these services to APHA since 2014 and the remaining three suppliers, since 2021.

The contracting authority, APHA, is relying on the single supplier direct award justification in paragraph 6 of schedule 5 of the Procurement Act 2023: (a) due to an absence of competition for technical reasons, only a particular supplier can supply the goods, services or works required; and (b) there are no reasonable alternatives to those goods, services or works.

The explanations as to why the justification applies are as follows.

Absence of competition for technical reasons - paragraph 6(a). APHA applied clear and objective criteria to assess the technical capability of suppliers on the market. The identified suppliers are the only suppliers (i) able to provide high value PME data of the requisite equivalent standard of VICs and (ii) with the technical capability to operate a diagnostic PME and disease surveillance service for animals, as part of an integrated surveillance network with existing APHA sites and databases. The suppliers can operate as a strategic extension to APHA's diagnostic and surveillance capabilities and ensure comprehensive PME access across England and Wales.

The suppliers' technical capability includes (but is not limited to):

- delivery of PME outputs that are quality-assured and fully compliant with Veterinary Investigation Diagnosis Analysis ("VIDA") data recording requirements, and facilitating integration into APHA's epidemiological datasets;
- substantial experience in conducting PMEs and diagnosing both routine and emerging animal diseases;
- personnel registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons ("RCVS");

- purpose-built or suitably adapted PME facilities for large animal carcasses, meeting all relevant biosecurity, health and safety, and environmental regulations; and
- IT systems compatible with APHA's Data Capture Tool to enable secure and efficient surveillance data transmission.

The suppliers' ability to meet these requirements, in combination, effectively constitute exclusive rights. These rights arise from the unique integration of technical capability, infrastructure, and operational readiness that enables only these suppliers to deliver the services to the required standard and within the required timeframe. No other suppliers currently possess the combination of VIDA-compliant data systems, purpose-built PME facilities, accredited veterinary personnel, and established integration with APHA's surveillance infrastructure. These characteristics are essential to the delivery of the services. Accordingly, the suppliers hold exclusive rights in practice to deliver the services required under this contract.

No reasonable alternatives - paragraph 6(b).

It is not reasonable for APHA to acquire and fully implement an alternative PME and data surveillance service by the critical service delivery date of 1 January 2026 or at any point prior to 31 December 2028.

An alternative supplier(s) would have to build a replacement service. It would take significant time and financial investment in infrastructure to upgrade facilities to meet the requisite biosecurity, health and safety, and environmental regulations and standards. The service requires specialist facilities to enable the safe and efficient postmortem examination of animals, including large animals, and the correct and safe disposal of animal remains. Modifying or adapting facilities to meet the standards of the VIDA programme, invest in specialist diagnostic tools required for service delivery and train staff to operate a diagnostic PME service and collect surveillance data correctly, or this could pose a high risk to animal health and welfare, public health, and potentially, international trade. A replacement service would be built in the context of a limited and inconsistent demand for these services and a service critical delivery date of 1 January 2026. It would not be reasonable for an alternative supplier(s) to build a replacement service.

It would not be reasonable for APHA to transition to an alternative interim PME and data surveillance service. There is not sufficient time to (i) secure the facilities required; (ii) train staff to operate a diagnostic PME service and collect surveillance data correctly; and (iii) ensure service compatibility with VIDA data recording requirements, national surveillance protocols and APHA's existing epidemiological datasets by 1 January 2026. It is not reasonable for financial and practical reasons (including obtaining governance and funding) for APHA to secure the facilities and staff required to meet a limited demand for the services being supplied. Existing VICs and the suppliers' facilities are tailor-made for this purpose and already meet infrastructure and maintenance requirements. The

suppliers have suitably trained and skilled staff for every working day of the year, including registered veterinarians with appropriate skills and experience, and in the context of a limited and inconsistent demand for the service. Transitioning to an interim PME surveillance service is therefore not a reasonable or feasible alternative for financial and practical reasons.

In assessing the availability of reasonable alternatives, APHA has considered the wider market and has not identified any new entrants or other providers with the requisite technical capability, infrastructure, or integration with APHA systems. The market for PME services is highly specialised and constrained by the need for bespoke facilities, trained personnel, and data compatibility with national surveillance systems.

Therefore, there are no reasonable alternatives.

Suppliers

ABERYSTWYTH ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY LTD

- Companies House: 09341813
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PVTG-2973-YPZY

Y Buarth Rd

Aberystwyth

SY23 1ND

United Kingdom

Email: hwright@wvsc.wales

Website: <http://www.wvsc.wales>

Region: UKL14 - South West Wales

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): Yes

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA

SRUC

- Companies House: SC103046
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PRQY-1741-MMWW

Peter Wilson Building, King's Buildings, West Mains Road

Edinburgh

EH9 3JG

United Kingdom

Email: pre.award@sruc.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.sruc.ac.uk/>

Region: UKM75 - Edinburgh, City of

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA

THE ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE

- Companies House: RC000532

- UK Register of Learning Providers (UKPRN number): 10007779

Royal College Street

London

NW1 0TU

United Kingdom

Email: resad@rvc.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/>

Region: UKI31 - Camden and City of London

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

- Companies House: RC000648
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PYLM-8967-RQJH

Beacon House, Queens Road

Bristol

BS8 1QU

United Kingdom

Email: purchasing-office@bristol.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/>

Region: UKK11 - Bristol, City of

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): Yes

Contract 1. Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

- UK Register of Learning Providers (UKPRN number): 10007788
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PMCX-4817-NTNG

THE OLD SCHOOLS, TRINITY LANE

CAMBRIDGE

CB2 1TN

United Kingdom

Email: fincreditcontrol@admin.cam.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/>

Region: UKH12 - Cambridgeshire CC

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

- Companies House: RC000660
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PYNH-9859-XVMD

Foundation Building, 765 Brownlow Hill

Liverpool

L69 7ZX

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@liverpool.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.liverpool.ac.uk>

Region: UKD72 - Liverpool

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM (THE)

- Companies House: RC000664
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PXXD-7294-MZXW

King's Meadow Campus, Lenton Lane

Nottingham

NG7 2NR

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@nottingham.ac.uk

Website: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk>

Region: UKF14 - Nottingham

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY(THE)

- Companies House: RC000671
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PJPT-2767-WQLG

Stag Hill

Guildford

GU2 7XH

United Kingdom

Email: research-support@surrey.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.surrey.ac.uk>

Region: UKJ25 - West Surrey

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. Provision of Scanning Surveillance Activities for APHA

Contracting authority

Animal and Plant Health Agency

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PBHC-6261-BLLQ

Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@defra.gov.uk

Region: UKI32 - Westminster

Organisation type: Public authority - central government

Other organisation

These organisations are carrying out the procurement, or part of it, on behalf of the contracting authorities.

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Summary of their role in this procurement: undertaking the project on behalf of APHA

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PNBD-3289-CDGX

Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@defra.gov.uk

Region: UKI32 - Westminster

Contact organisation

Contact Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs for any enquiries.