Tender

Towards development of a UK peatland indicator framework

JNCC SUPPORT CO

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Scope

Reference

C25-0607-2122

Description

1. Joint Nature Conservation Committee

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is the statutory adviser to the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK and international nature conservation

Our role is to provide scientific evidence, information, and advice to inform decisions to protect the natural environment. Our specific role is to work on nature conservation issues that affect the UK as a whole and internationally, by:

• advising Government on the development and implementation of policies for, or

affecting, nature conservation in the UK and internationally;

• providing advice and disseminating knowledge on nature conservation issues affecting the UK and internationally;

• establishing common standards throughout the UK for nature conservation, including monitoring, research, and the analysis of results; and

• commissioning or supporting research which it deems relevant to these functions.

Background to JNCC can be found on JNCC's website at: https://jncc.gov.uk/about-jncc/

2. Project Aims

To develop conceptual models describing the variables affecting wildfire risk, flood risk, water quality and/or water provisioning in and downstream from peatland.

3. Project Background

When in good condition, peatlands are important for delivering a wide range of benefits to society, such as carbon storage and reduced emissions, wildfire regulation, flood regulation, water quality regulation, and water provision - Whilst a national indicator of peatland carbon balance already exists, within the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory, similar national scale data are not currently available for the other benefits that peatlands provide.

In order to ultimately reach the stage of developing additional indicators focused on societal outcomes, the first step is to gain a thorough understanding from the literature of the known variables affecting that benefit and develop a conceptual model - as specified within this invitation to tender.

The eventual existence of such indicators would allow for:

• more effective business cases to be made by those seeking funding for peatland conservation and restoration activities

• more informed decisions to be made by funders, and stronger justification for decisions they make around public spending

• a clear and relatable way to communicate the importance of peat to non-specialists, such as ministers and the general public

• tracking of progress through time, for example against each of the four UK countries' Peatland Strategies

• policymakers to design more effective policies through an improved understanding of the pressures and drivers that are affecting the indicator results

• depending on the format of the final model, potentially spatial prioritisation, prediction of the output of any given policy, and an understanding of any trade-offs and potential for perverse incentives from a given policy.

Stakeholder engagement across the four UK countries has identified a need for a UK peatland indicator framework, and several potential indicators were selected as priorities - four of which (wildfire risk, flood risk, water quality, and water provisioning) JNCC wish to let an initial research phase on. JNCC have already undertaken a short scoping exercise on the feasibility of a range of potential peatland indicators, the outputs of which will be shared with the successful contractor as a starting point.

For the purposes of this project, we use the term 'indicator' in its broadest sense; anything that gives an indicative metric of change through time, whether that is measured or modelled, and whether that is related to a driver, a pressure, a state, an impact or a response; with modelled impact indicators being the specific direction within this that we wish to take forward. We are however focusing on indicators relevant to a national scale - whether producing a national total or a national map - rather than indicators that are designed to be used in an individual project on a very small scale, for example to determine whether restoration actions of an individual project have been successful.

4. Project Objectives

To meet the overall aims of this project (Section 2), the objectives are:

1. To undertake an evidence review identifying the factors affecting peatland's delivery of the following societal outcomes. We welcome bids to develop a minimum of one and a maximum of all four outcomes, depending on the expertise of the bidder. Please note JNCC reserves the right to accept all or part of your bid:

o Wildfire risk

o Flood risk

o Water quality

o Water provision

• 2. To develop a conceptual model (a graphical representation of a system, identifying components of the system and the relationships between them) based on the literature review findings

3. To note any relevant available data that the contractor comes across whilst undertaking the other two objectives

5. Project Objectives: Detailed Tasks

1. Evidence review

• Each review should answer one of the following key questions:

o Which variables (pressures, management actions, condition metrics, geographic or climatic features, etc) affect wildfire risk in peatland environments? What is their relationship (e.g. positive/negative, strong/weak, linear/complex) with wildfire risk in peatland environments?

o Which peatland variables (pressures, management actions, condition metrics, geographic or climatic features, etc) affect downstream flood risk? What is their relationship (e.g. positive/negative, strong/weak, linear/complex) with downstream flood risk?

o Which peatland variables (pressures, management actions, condition metrics, geographic or climatic features, etc) affect downstream water quality? What is their relationship (e.g. positive/negative, strong/weak, linear/complex) with downstream water quality? Water quality includes the presence of discolouration, the presence of a range of specific chemical pollutants (e.g. nitrates and sulphates) and/or water treatment costs to remove those of relevance to human health.

o Which peatland variables (pressures, management actions, condition metrics, geographic or climatic features, etc) affect water provisioning capabilities? What is their relationship (e.g. positive/negative, strong/weak, linear/complex) with water provision capabilities?

• The search strategy and information to be recorded from each paper should be proposed to JNCC at the start-up meeting, for input and agreement, before work commences

• Where possible, the review methodology should align with the 'quick scoping review' guidance provided at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-production-of-quick-scoping-reviews-and-rapid-evidence-assessments

• Where any quantitative evidence about relationships between variables, interactions between variables, and the relative weighting of variables are found, this information should be recorded (e.g. the benefit increases linearly with variable x; or variable a only effects the benefit when variable b is in a particular state)

• The list of papers screened, included/excluded, and raw notes from each paper reviewed should be shared as an output

• In addition, findings should be written up into a short summary that could be included within a technical report at a later date, if an indicator based on this information is subsequently developed

• Where evidence gaps are noted (e.g. 'it was not possible to conclude on x from the studies available'), these should be noted within the summary

• Recent JNCC work assessing the impacts of peatland restoration actions on ecosystem service delivery will be shared with the successful contractor for them to build on . If undertaking the wildfire review, the contractor may also wish to build on this previous JNCC project predicting wildfire risk in the Brecon Beacons: https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/7691fb4a-b77a-4f8e-8660-a06b567ba345

1. Conceptual model

• By conceptual model, we mean a flowchart depicting key factors of relevance to the societal benefit in question, including peatland-relevant pressures, management actions, condition metrics, geographic or climatic features, and intermediate steps in the system

• An example of a conceptual model that has been developed for a separate JNCC project on mineral soils is included here for reference:

• This task will synthesise the findings from the literature review into a similar diagram

• The aim is not for an entirely complete systems map, but to identify the variables likely to be most significant. The successful contractor will involve the JNCC steering group in the decision-making process behind inclusion/exclusion of each variable

• The purpose of this is to act as a framework for potential subsequent quantitative model development in future financial years

2. Data review

• . Whilst we do not expect the contractor to undertake a full data review of sources that could be used as input data for each variable within the conceptual model in any potential subsequent modelling, we do ask the contractor to make a note of any data that may be relevant for this purpose which they come across anyway as part of their evidence review.

• Ideally, these will be open access data sources. Where open access data are not available, licensed datasets can be noted alongside their relevant licensing information

• Ideally, these will be spatial data, with the geographic resolution noted. Where spatial data are not available, non-spatial data can be noted

• Ideally, these will be UK in scale. Where only smaller geographic scales are available, these can be included instead, with the area that they do cover noted

Data on previous wildfires, floods, water quality and availability of water for provision in a subset of relevant locations will also be considered within scope, for potential use to train an empirical model in future that captures the variables identified within the literature review.

Total value (estimated)

- £41,667 excluding VAT
- £50,000 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 12 January 2026 to 20 March 2026
- 2 months, 9 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 41000000 - Collected and purified water
- 45246400 - Flood-prevention works

- 75251110 - Fire-prevention services
- 90700000 - Environmental services
- 92534000 - Wildlife preservation services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Enquiry deadline

18 November 2025, 9:00am

Tender submission deadline

25 November 2025, 9:00am

Submission address and any special instructions

To be eligible for consideration your tender must arrive by 09:00 hours on Tuesday, 25th November 2025. Please submit your return by email to the following address: TenderResponse@jncc.gov.uk Please direct any queries in respect of this tender to the named individuals below as appropriate.

Tenders may be submitted electronically

No

Award criteria

Name	Type	Weighting
Quality of Bids	Quality	50%
Details of Contractor	Quality	20%
Cost	Cost	20%
Sustainability	Quality	10%

Procedure

Procedure type

Below threshold - open competition

Documents

Associated tender documents

C25-0607-2122.zip

You are invited by JNCC Support Co (JNCC) to submit a tender for the supply of works or services required under the above project. If interested, you should download and carefully read the documents contained within the zip file.

C25-0607-2122_V2.zip

The contract start date has now been extended.

Contracting authority

JNCC SUPPORT CO

- Companies House: 05380206
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PRPL-6981-TDJT

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PETERBOROUGH

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United Kingdom

Email: contractqueries@jncc.gov.uk

Region: UKH11 - Peterborough

Organisation type: Public authority - central government

Devolved regulations that apply: Scotland