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Planning

Water Quality Research and Catchment Planning in the River Wye

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-081644

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05f314

Published 10 December 2025, 4:02pm

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Scope

Description

Defra and Welsh government are tendering for a new research project on water quality in the River Wye. In particular, we want to gather evidence on the impact of agriculture in this catchment and identify actions which will help us tackle the associated pollution.

This project has the following aims:

1. Investigate the sources of the pollution and pressures affecting the river, in particular focussing on diffuse agricultural pollution
2. Study the impacts of changing farming practices and land management
3. Develop and test new ways to improve water quality
4. Understand best practice for undertaking research involving a complex stakeholder group

The project was announced the project in March 2025, details of which can be seen [here](#).

Bidders should be able to demonstrate experience of all aspects of research planning, including developing effective methodology, stakeholder engagement, and project governance. Bidders must have experience in delivering 'living labs' research on farms.

They should also have a good understanding of agricultural practices and water quality, with knowledge of this catchment and stakeholders being an advantage.

This will be a high-profile programme of work, in which a variety of stakeholders (including ministers) take an active interest. Successful bidders will be expected to provide regular updates on emerging evidence and will work with officials to communicate interim findings.

The project is to be contracted through an open tender competition. It is expected to commence in February/March 2026 and will last for approximately 3-5 years.

The project is funded to cover £1M and we welcome consortia bids.

Supplier Engagement Event

Please note that we will be holding a joint Defra and Welsh Government supplier event on 17 December 2025 at 2pm. More information will be provided in due course.

If you or your organisation is interested in attending this event, please register your interest at:

WyeJointResearch@defra.gov.uk

All expression of Interest must reach Defra on or before Monday 15th December 2025 by 17:00pm

Total value (estimated)

- £1,000,000 excluding VAT
- £1,200,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 23 March 2026 to 24 March 2031
- Possible extension to 25 September 2031
- 5 years, 6 months, 3 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 73110000 - Research services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Engagement

Engagement deadline

17 December 2025

Engagement process description

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO HOLD PRELIMINARY ENGAGEMENT

Title: Water Quality Research and Catchment Planning in the River Wye

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Participation

Particular suitability

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

Contracting authority

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PNBD-3289-CDGX

Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

United Kingdom

Contact name: DGC

Telephone: 03459335577

Email: procurement@defra.gov.uk

Website: [Region: UKI32 - Westminster](https://defra-family.force.com/s>Welcome</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Organisation type: Public authority - central government