Clarifications to Bidder’s Questions:

**Septic Tank and PTP upgrade: opportunity mapping & modelling**

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| 1 | One of the key outputs is for the opportunity mapping to be built using open-source software.  Our standard software we use for these applications is ESRI.  Would this be acceptable to NE as an output? Or is it not part of NE’s held software licenses? | I have checked this with our technical team, they have said: the model must be developed in open-source software or ArcGIS Pro which NE already holds a license for. |
| 2 | We are interested in submitting a proposal for the opportunity.  However, we would like to request an extension of approximately 1.5 weeks, with a revised submission deadline of 11th June. | We are currently not able to accept any extensions on existing timetable. Sorry for any inconvenience this may cause. |
| 3 | Has funding been allocated to this project? We would like to know the answer to this before proceeding to compile a proposal. | we have received internal approval to begin the procurement process. This is being twin tracked with Natural England awaiting final confirmation of budget through the annual Spending Review. Therefore, we will not be able to finally commit to awarding the contract until funds are released. |
| 4 | Will there be specific Natural England templates and data standards to apply to this project? Will we receive all necessary licensing for all datasets and templates from Natural England upon commencement? | Natural England (NE) will supply a template document for the technical report that will be commissioned as a part of this tender. Specifications for the delivery of the opportunity mapping will also be provided, alongside metadata templates. As outlined within the Request for Quote (RfQ) the opportunity mapping should aim to use datasets NE already have a license for. NE will provide access to datasets that meet this criteria. The list of resources provided in the RfQ is an example of some resources that could be used under this prerequisite, but the list is not exhaustive. |
| 5 | Can a copy of this be provided?:  Document link "• Natural England Programmes - 14.12.2022\_Replacing On-site Wastewater Treatment systems to generate credits for Nutrient Neutrality.pdf - All Documents" is not accessible. | This will be provided on award of contract. |
| 6 | For the cost estimate: List of Certified Small Wastewater Treatment Systems Up to 50PT  This website provides PIA certificates of effluent quality and treatment efficiency, not cost estimates. That information is obtained by liaising with suppliers for quotes. Is there a different database of costs available from Natural England? | NE do not hold a database of costs. |
| 7 | Is there an expectation that the British Water database of SSDs will be number crunched for performance standards of N and P? Or is it based on the Natural England N and P effluent ratings built into the Nutrient Budget Calculator? | The effluent ratings in the Nutrient Budget Calculator and are default. It is expected that through the contract the supplier will work with NE to determine the performance standards. |
| 8 | Can the model and data be developed in commercial software like ESRI - ArcGIS Pro, but presented in a format that is presented in open source software? | The model must be developed in open-source software or ArcGIS Pro which NE already holds a license for. |
| 9 | Can internal working standards where internal version control is documented and followed, be used in place of a dedicated version control software? (we will log metadata and our internal QA procedures for all outputs). | This is acceptable, version control documentation will need to be supplied as an appendix to the final output. |
| 10 | If there is benefit in using licensed datasets, can quotes be obtained for these upon agreement of the methodology with Natural England? (e.g. BGS 50K Geology - Solid and Drift) | There is no further budget to acquire licensed data. |
| 11 | The EA has produced a National level shapefile of SSDs in England already (not published but held by National Science Group).  Has this been considered in terms of its potential to reduce cost for this project and prevent potentially unnecessary work? | We have worked with the EA on developing this specification. They have confirmed it will not be duplication, as the national level shapefile is out-dated. |
| 12 | Please could you confirm that the closing date is 3 June 2025 and not 17 June 2025? | The tender submission deadline is the 3rd of June. |
| 13 | In your scope of works document you require the following;  1. Scale of opportunity: The scale of opportunity (in units) of upgrading inefficient septic tanks and PTPs in each catchment. This will need to be mapped using GI software.  We use G.P.S for mapping , this is put into a Q J.I.S file and presentenced in an O.S tile, our technical team has checked, and this is compatible with GI. Would this be acceptable when submitting methodology our detailed evaluation criteria. | We need to receive the data in either shapefile or geopackage format. |
| 14 | The NE-Request for Quote - Septic Tank and PTP upgrade document states that there are 20 catchments to be modelled and are listed on page 22. However, the Septic Tank Order Form NE Standard Goods Services Terms and Conditions Clean Septic Tanks states that there are 27 catchments. Please can you confirm if it is 20 or 27 catchments. | To confirm, it is the 20 catchments listed on page 22 of the RfQ document. |
| 15 | Would you be able to confirm the location of the stakeholder workshop to sort out the methodology? We think this should be face to face. | We did not specify that the methodology workshop or the final deliverable would need to be conducted face to face. We are of course happy for these to be conducted face to face but this consideration must be taken into account in your budgeting for the tender. |
| 16 | We also think it would be beneficial to have a face to face demonstration of the final deliverables, so could you provide a location for that meeting as well? | The contract managers for this tender are located in Natural England’s London office. If we were to have face to face meetings during the tender the meetings would be located here with exact dates and addresses provided after the tender had been awarded. |
| 17 | In the Order Form, Section 14 the IPR has not been selected can you please confirm which Option is to be selected? | We will be selecting option B, this is the standard option for the majority of contracts created by Natural England where Natural England is the authority/customer. Apologies this was not made clear within the order form, we missed editing this. For context option B is the following ‘Where Option B is selected in the Order, any New IPR created under the Agreement is owned by the Customer. The Customer gives the Contractor a licence to use any Existing IPRs and the New IPR which the Contractor reasonably requires for the purpose of fulfilling its obligations during the term of the Agreement.’ |
| 18 | In the Order Form, Section 21 Further Data Protection Provisions Yes has been selected, however we understand that we won’t hold personal data about the properties only the location. Can you please confirm that this is correct? And if so clarify why? | The Data protection provisions box has been ticked as a precautionary measure. After moderation when a supplier has been selected the complete order form will be sent out to the supplier to be signed by both parties in agreement. If at this point it is clear that there will be no identifiable personal information this box will be deselected before signing. |
| 19 | The NE Request for Quote document details in Section 2: The Invitation:  Supporting Documentation  The following supporting documentation should be provided:  • Research methodologies  • Health & safety policies/certificates  • Environment policies  • VAT registration number  • Public liability insurance  • Professional indemnity insurance  • CV’s  • Past work  Are we required to submit all these documents as part of our submission? If so for the ones highlighted in yellow can you please detail what is required specifically. | You will only be scored based on your commercial pricing and responses to the 3 weighted technical questions; however the supporting documents you submit can be used to expand your answers for these questions. As part of ‘Q3 Experience of the Project Team’ we require evidence of 2 examples your current or previous work within government departments, wider public sector, or equivalent that are similar in subject matter or scope to this requirement. Similarly, as part of ‘Q2 Methodology’ you will be expected to submit your specific approach used to fulfil this contract. This answer in combination with evidence of 2 current or previous relevant works should comfortable satisfy the research methodologies and past work supporting documentation requirements.  The authority has set itself challenging commitments and targets to improve the environmental economic and social impacts of its estate management, operation, and procurement. These support the Government’s green commitments. The policies are included in the Authority’s sustainable procurement policy statement published at: Defra’s sustainable procurement policy statement - GOV.UK. With this context Natural England has a responsibility to practice sustainable procurement. As part of this we ask supplier to submit evidence of how they try to lower emissions, work sustainably, and take the environment into consideration. Any documents/policies highlighting this is what we would like to see for ‘environmental policies’. |
| 20 | The resource listed as Detailed Sewage Network map. Can you confirm that these are spatial data, of so what is the file format and geometry type please? | We are working with the Environment Agency to access this data. We will aim to provide as spatial data in shapefile format, but I cannot confirm the geometry type at this time. Natural England also hold a wastewater treatment work catchment areas shapefile which will be used if there are issues accessing EA data. This is in polygon format. |
| 21 | In the RfQ it mentions that *NE will provide unpublished guidance and methods for calculating reductions from upgrading PTPs and septic tanks to inform the methodology.* Can you confirm if the figures for calculating TN and TP are outlined? If so, are they provided in a range or just single figures. | We have responded to a similar clarification in Question 7 in Q&As 2025S 000-02158 on the tender webpage. Hopefully this will answer your question. |