

Request for Quotation

**Marine recreational vessels as a pathway for the introduction and spread of marine Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) in the UK**

June 2025

Request for Quotation: Marine recreational vessels as a pathway for the introduction and spread of marine Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) in the UK

You are invited to submit a quotation for the requirement described in the specification, Section 2.

Please confirm by email, receipt of these documents and whether you intend to submit a quote or not.

Your response should be returned to the following email address by:

Email: jan.maclennan@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: **Monday 4th August 2025**

Time: 5pm

Ensure you include the name of the quotation and ‘Final Submission’ in the subject field to make it clear that it is your response.

Contact Details and Timetable

Jan Maclennan will be your contact for any questions linked to the content of the quote or the process. Please submit any clarification questions via email and note that, unless commercially sensitive, both the question and the response will be circulated to all tenderers.

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| Action | Date |
| Date of issue of RFQ | 27th June 2025 |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 17th July 2025 at 5pm |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 4th August 2025 at 5pm |
| Intended date of Contract Award | w/c 18th August 2025 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | w/c 18th August 2025 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration | w/c 18th August 2025 to 31st March 2026 |

Section 1: General Information

Glossary

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following words and expressions used within this Request for Quotation shall have the following meanings (to be interpreted in the singular or plural as the context requires):

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| “Authority” | Means Natural England who is the Contracting Authority. |
| “Contract” | means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier. |
| “Response” | means the information submitted by a supplier in response to the RFQ. |
| “RFQ” | means this Request for Quotation and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to suppliers. |

Conditions applying to the RFQ

You should examine your Response and related documents ensuring it is complete and in accordance with the stated instructions prior to submission.

Your Response must contain sufficient information to enable the Authority to evaluate it fairly and effectively. You should ensure that you have prepared your Response fully and accurately and that prices quoted are arithmetically correct for the units stated.

By submitting a Response, you, the supplier, are deemed to accept the terms and conditions provided in the RFQ. Confirmation of this is required in Annex 2.

Failure to comply with the instructions set out in the RFQ may result in the supplier’s exclusion from this quotation process.

Acceptance of Quotations

By issuing this RFQ the Authority does not bind itself to accept any quotation and reserves the right not to award a contract to any supplier who submits a quotation.

Costs

The Authority will not reimburse you for any costs and expenses which you incur preparing and submitting your quotation, even if the Authority amends or terminates the procurement process.

Self-Declaration and Mandatory Requirements

The RFQ includes a self-declaration response (Annex 1) which covers basic information about the supplier, as well as any grounds for exclusion. If you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated.

Any mandatory requirements will be set out in Section 2, Specification of Requirements and, if you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated.

Clarifications

Any request for clarification regarding the RFQ and supporting documentation must be submitted via email no later than the deadline for clarifications set out in the Timetable. The Authority shall be under no obligation to respond to queries raised after the clarification deadline.

The Authority will respond to all reasonable clarifications as soon as possible but cannot guarantee a minimum response time. The Authority will publish all clarifications and its responses to all suppliers via email unless deemed commercially sensitive.

If a supplier believes that a request for clarification is commercially sensitive, it should clearly state this when submitting the clarification request. However, if the Authority considers either that:

* the clarification and response are not commercially sensitive; and
* all suppliers may benefit from its disclosure,

then the Authority will notify the supplier (via email), and the supplier will have an opportunity to withdraw the request for clarification by sending a further message requesting the withdrawal of the clarification request. If not withdrawn by the supplier within 2 working days of the Authority’s notification, the Authority may publish the clarification request and its response to all suppliers and the Authority shall not be liable to the supplier for any consequences of such publication.

The Authority reserves the right to seek clarification of any aspect of a quotation and/or provide additional information during the evaluation phase to carry out a fair evaluation. Where the Authority seeks clarification on any aspect of the quotation, the supplier must respond within the timeframe requested by the Authority.

Amendments

The Authority may amend the RFQ at any time prior to the deadline for receipt. If it amends the RFQ the Authority will notify you via email.

Suppliers may modify their quotation prior to the deadline for Responses. No Responses may be modified after the deadline for Responses.

Suppliers may withdraw their quotations at any time by submitting a notice via the email to the named contact.

Conditions of Contract

The Authority’s Standard Good and Services Terms & Conditions (used for purchases under £50k) can be located on the [Natural England website](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-terms-and-conditions-for-goods-and-services/standard-goods-and-services-terms-and-conditions-10000-to-50000) and will be applicable to any contract awarded as a result of this quotation process. The Authority will not accept any changes to these terms and conditions proposed by a supplier.

Suppliers should note that the quotation provided by the successful bidder will form part of the Contract.

Prices

Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, exclusive of VAT.

Disclosure

All Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement, including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice. For these purposes, the Authority may disclose within Government any details contained in your quotation. The information will not be disclosed outside Government during the procurement.

In addition, the Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which provide a public right of access to information held by public bodies. In accordance with these two statutes, the Authority may be required to disclose information contained in your quotation to any person who submits a request for information pursuant to those statutes.

Further to the Government’s transparency agenda, all UK Government organisations must advertise on Find a Tender Service (FTS) in accordance with the following publication thresholds:

* Central Contracting Authority’s: £12,000
* Sub Central Contracting Authority’s and NHS Trusts: £30,000

For the purpose of this RFQ the Authority is classified as a Central Contracting Authority with a publication threshold of £12,000 inclusive of VAT.

If this opportunity is advertised via FTS, we are obliged to publish details of the awarded contract.

A copy of the contract must also be published with confidential information redacted.

By submitting a Response, you consent to these terms as part of the procurement.

Disclaimers

Whilst the information in this RFQ and any supporting information referred to herein or provided to you by the Authority have been prepared in good faith the Authority does not warrant that this information is comprehensive or that it has been independently verified.

The Authority does not:

* make any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFQ;
* accept any liability for the information contained in the RFQ or for the fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information; or
* accept any liability for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation or any other liability which cannot lawfully be excluded) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

Any supplier considering entering into contractual relationships with the Authority following receipt of the RFQ should make its own investigations and independent assessment of the Authority and its requirements for the goods and/or services and should seek its own professional financial and legal advice.

Information Security requirements

The Government Security Classification Policy (GSCP) sets out the administrative system used by HM Government (HMG) to protect information and data assets appropriately against prevalent threats through the use of ‘classification tiers’. HMG uses three classification tiers; OFFICIAL, SECRET and TOP SECRET. Each tier provides a set of recommended baseline behaviours and a set of protective controls, which are proportionate to the threat profile for that tier AND the potential impact of a compromise, accidental loss or incorrect disclosure of information held within that tier.

Tenderers and suppliers must ensure that appropriate protective security controls are in place to comply with the GSCP and manage the information shared and received as part of this tender exercise.

A full suite of guidance documents is available on GOV.UK, with specific guidance for tenderers and suppliers set out in [Guidance 1.6 - Contractors and Contracting Authorities.docx (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1166155/Guidance_1.6_-_Contractors_and_Contracting_Authorities.pdf).

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The Authority expects suppliers to declare where they have used AI software in the creation of Tender responses or intend to use AI software in the performance of the contract. How any AI software was, or will be, used should be to be declared within the technical submission part of the tender. We may require you to answer specific question/s on this topic, particularly where the Authority expects that usage is highly likely or clearly relates to the contract requirements.

Suppliers must follow any guidelines or regulations related to AI use and declarations as indicated in the [PPN 2/24 Improving Transparency of AI use in Procurement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-0224-improving-transparency-of-ai-use-in-procurement/ppn-0224-improving-transparency-of-ai-use-in-procurement-html).

Any information, instructions, or data provided by the Authority to suppliers as part of this tender, the requirements, or contract should not be directly inserted into Generative AI software (such as Gemini, ChatGPT, or CoPilot) without prior permission, unless this information is clearly published in the public domain.

Use of any Authority confidential tender information for training AI software is prohibited. it is advised that Defra’s data or instructions, or anything marked as confidential should not be directly inserted into AIs. For example, putting Authority’s instruction email into Gemini, ChatGPT, or CoPilot is not recommended.

If you intend to use AI to provide goods or services to the Authority, then you are required to complete a declaration which is simply answering the question stated within the 'Information to be returned’. The answer to this question will not be used in scoring your quote.

Protection of Personal Data

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 the supplier must agree to the following:

You must only process any personal data in strict accordance with instructions from the Authority.

* You must ensure that all the personal data that we disclose to you or you collect on our behalf under this agreement are kept confidential.
* You must take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees who have access to personal data.
* Only employees who may be required to assist in meeting the obligations under this agreement may have access to the personal data.
* Any disclosure of personal data must be made in confidence and extend only so far as that which is specifically necessary for the purposes of this agreement.
* You must ensure that there are appropriate security measures in place to safeguard against any unauthorised access or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage or disclosure of the personal data.
* On termination of this agreement, for whatever reason, the personal data must be returned to us promptly and safely, together with all copies in your possession or control.

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

For the purposes of the Regulations the Authority is the data processor.

The personal information that we have asked you provide on individuals (data subjects) that will be working for you on this contract will be used in compiling the tender list and in assessing your offer. If you are unsuccessful the information will be held and destroyed within two years of the award of contracts. If you are awarded a contract it will be retained for the duration of the contract and destroyed within seven years of the contract’s expiry.

We may monitor the performance of the individuals during the execution of the contract, and the results of our monitoring, together with the information that you have provided, will be used in determining what work is allocated under the contract, and in any renewal of the contract or in the award of future contracts of a similar nature. The information will not be disclosed to anyone outside the Authority without the consent of the data subject, unless the Authority is required by law to make such disclosures.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

The Client is striving to create a diverse and inclusive working environment where every individual has equality of opportunity to progress and to apply their unique insights to making the UK a great place for living. The Service Provider is expected to respect this commitment in all dealings with Natural England staff and service users.

Suppliers are expected to;

* support Defra group to achieve its Public Sector Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and to support delivery of [Defra group’s Equality & Diversity Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024).
* meet the standards set out in the [Government’s Supplier Code of Conduct](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplier-code-of-conduct)
* work with Defra group to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion impacts are addressed (positive and negative) in the goods, services and works we procure, barriers are removed and opportunities realised.

Sustainable Procurement

Addressing global sustainability impacts and realising additional community benefits within commercial activity is core to Defra group’s approach, working with its supply chain is key to achieving sustainable outcomes. In addition to supporting Defra group to meet its outcomes we look to understand and reduce negative sustainability impacts associated with our commercial activity and realise benefits.

The Client encourages its suppliers to share these values, work to address negative impacts and realise opportunities, measure performance and success.

Suppliers are expected to have an understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals, the interconnections between them and the relevance to the Goods, Services and works procured on the Client’s behalf

Conflicts of Interest

The concept of a conflict of interest includes but is not limited to any situation where an Involved Person or Relevant Body has directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure and/or affect the integrity of the contract award.

We expect suppliers to mitigate appropriately against any real or perceived conflict of interest through their work with government. A supplier with a position of influence gained through a contract should not use that position to unfairly disadvantage any other supplier or reduce the potential for future competition

Where the supplier is aware of any circumstances giving rise to a conflict of interest or has any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise you should inform the Authority of this as soon as possible (whether before or after they have submitted a quotation). Tenderers should remain alert to the possibility of conflicts of interest arising at all stages of the procurement and should update the Authority if any new circumstances or information arises, or there are any changes to information already provided to the Authority. Failure to do so, and/or to properly manage any conflicts of interest may result in a quotation being rejected.

Provided that it has been carried out in an open, fair and transparent manner, routine pre-market engagement carried out by the Authority should not represent a conflict of interest for the supplier.

Section 2: The Invitation

Specification of Requirements

Background to Natural England

Natural England's purpose is to help conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Our vision is ‘Thriving Nature for people and planet’. We aim to achieve this through our mission ‘Building partnerships for Nature’s recovery’.

Our priorities for 2020 to 2025 support our mission and the ambitions of the [government’s 25 Year Environment Plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan). We aim for:

* a well-managed Nature Recovery Network across land, water and sea, which creates and protects resilient ecosystems rich in wildlife and natural beauty, enjoyed by people and widely benefiting society
* people connected to the natural environment for their own and society’s wellbeing, enjoyment and prosperity
* Nature-based solutions contributing fully to tackling the climate change challenge and wider environmental hazards and threats
* improvements in the natural capital that drives sustainable economic growth, healthy food systems and prospering communities
* evidence and expertise being used by a broad range of partnerships, organisations and communities to achieve Nature recovery and enable effective regulation and accreditation
* being a values-led organisation that delivers excellent service standards to all partners, organisations and communities engaged in achieving Nature’s recovery

Project title: **Marine recreational vessels as a pathway for the introduction and spread of marine Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) in the UK**

Background to the specific work area relevant to this purchase

Invasive non-native species (INNS) pose major threats to native biodiversity and ecosystem services and are identified as one of the most significant drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide, second only to habitat destruction. Marine INNS can be a threat to protected habitats and species impacting on the condition of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Natural England has a responsibility to report on the condition of MPAs and as such has a requirement to improve our understanding of risks from INNS to their condition.

Natural England is also responsible for supporting delivery of the [Great Britain Non-Native Species Strateg](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/about/gb-strategy/)y (“GB strategy”) which provides a strategic framework within which the actions of government and key stakeholders can be better co-ordinated. The GB strategy follows the guiding principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD[[1]](#footnote-1)) (prevention in the first instance, followed by rapid detection and early eradication then long-term control).

INNS are moved via various pathways and recreational boating is a well-known vector for INNS worldwide. Most recreational boats arriving into the UK or travelling around UK waters will likely have clean hulls; however, some may not, or may have contamination associated with bilge, propellers or anchors. There is also the risk that apparently clean boats will have niches that collect fouling. No data on the proportion of recreational boats arriving in the UK or travelling around the UK that are fouled has been found; however, in other countries contamination rates of more than 50% have been recorded (e.g. Pelletier-Rousseau et al 2018 and [National Risk Assessment of Recreational Boating as a Vector for Marine Non indigenous Species](https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/40601699.pdf))

Preventing the introduction of INNS is recognised as the most cost effective and least environmentally damaging management intervention. This is especially important in the marine environment as once INNS are established in a new area, they are considered nearly impossible to eradicate or control.

There have been several campaigns and strategies in recent years to raise awareness of the importance of clean boats and reducing the risk of spreading marine INNS via this pathway. This includes the development of the [Recreational Boating Pathway Action Plan](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/biosecurity/pathway-action-plans/recreational-boating-pap-for-great-britain#:~:text=This%20PAP%20is%20one%20of,in%20relation%20to%20this%20issue.), promotion of [marine biosecurity planning](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/biosecurity/marine-biosecurity) and ‘[Check, Clean, Dry’](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/what-can-i-do/check-clean-dry). However these actions are largely voluntary and we currently have limited evidence of their effectiveness. A [stakeholder survey](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/assets/Document-repository/2018_Survey_of_Attitudes_Knowledge_and_Behaviour_in_Relation_to_Non-native_Species-7.pdf) for the GB Non Native Species Secretariat in 2018 reported mixed results amongst boaters (both marine and freshwater) on the adoption of good biosecurity.

We lack current evidence on the number of heavily fouled recreational boats both entering the UK from abroad but also travelling around different locations within the country. Risks of spread could increase if for example boats reside for some time, gathering fouling, and then move to another marina or if the home marina is in an area with high priority INNS/recent outbreaks.

**Overall project aim:** Estimating the current level of heavily fouled marine recreational vessels arriving into and travelling around the UK as a vector for INNS introductions and spread. This information will provide evidence to determine the potential effectiveness of current biosecurity advice and implementation of best practice. This in turn will help inform the potential need to reassess how best to manage this pathway and the mechanisms needed to do so. It will also provide a useful baseline against which any future additional management interventions could be evaluated.

This project will deliver key evidence requirements outlined in the [GB Evidence Strategic Plan » NNSS](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/resources-and-projects/non-native-species-research/gb-evidence-strategic-plan):

* Deepening our understanding of the characteristics (including volume and frequency) of our priority pathways and identifying the most effective risk management measures.
* The social science element to biosecurity - including identifying cost-effective and practical ways to encourage adherence to biosecurity measures and discouraging high risk behaviours.
* Developing effective and proportionate measures that can be used to prevent spread through priority activities/behaviours.  Understanding how these might be best deployed in real world situations.

And will contribute to a key evidence gap identified during the development of the [Recreational Boating Pathway Action](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/resources-and-projects/non-native-species-research/gb-evidence-strategic-plan) plan:

*‘To what extent do marine vessels fouled by invasive species arrive in GB? Can this be better quantified? From where do the majority of vessels carrying INNS originate and where do they enter GB?’*

We have limited information on the number of marine recreational vessels arriving in the UK per year. There are approximately 723 marinas across the UK, and while the exact number of coastal marinas isn’t broken out separately, a significant portion of them will be located along the coast[[2]](#footnote-2).

Experience suggests that in-person surveys, semi-structured interviews or questionnaires and visits in marinas will likely be the most effective option for engaging with this sector and gathering the data required. In Canada (Pelletier-Rousseau et al, 2019), a similar project used questionnaires to obtain general information on marinas and their boating communities alongside hull fouling surveys. Boater questionnaires were used to evaluate boating movement patterns and maintenance history. This included gathering the following information:

* Home marina, boat type, boat size, hull type, where it is stored or trailered
* Antifouling practices (type and time since last antifouling paint application, time since last cleaning)
* Travel history (marinas visited, number of nights spent in each marina and types of trips undertaken)

Boat fouling surveys were also carried out by examining the boats of the questionnaire survey respondents to assess contamination rates. General macrofouling can be considered as a potential indicator of INNS presence. Definitions of clean vs fouled boats dependent on level of macrofouling were determined.

Useful background references

Ashton, Gail & Davidson, Ian & Ruiz, Gregory. (2014). Transient small boats as a long-distance coastal vector for dispersal of biofouling organisms. Estuaries and Coasts. 37. 10.1007/s12237-014-9782-9.

Ashton, Gail & Boos, Karin & Shucksmith, R. & Cottier-Cook, Elizabeth. (2006). Risk assessment of hull fouling as a vector for marine non-natives in Scotland. Aquatic Invasions Issue. 1. 214-218. 10.3391/ai.2006.1.4.4. [Risk assessment of hull fouling as a vector for marine non-natives in Scotland](http://www.aquaticinvasions.net/2006/AI_2006_1_4_Ashton_etal_2.pdf)

Clarke Murray C, Pakhamoz EA, Therriault TW (2011) Recreational boating: a large unregulated vector transporting marine invasive species. Divers Distrib 17:1161–1172. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1472-4642.2011.00798.x>

Ecostructure Conference presentation ‘Stakeholder engagement to improve biosecurity in ports and marinas’ [Stakeholder engagement to improve biosecurity in ports and marinas (Liz Morris-Webb)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcnkntwKKus)

IRELAND’S INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES RECREATIONAL BOATING AND WATERCRAFT PATHWAY ACTION PLAN 2022 – 2027 <https://invasives.ie/app/uploads/2022/07/Irelands_IAS_RecreationalBoatingAndWatercraft-PathwayActionPlan_2022-2027-FINAL.pdf>

Pelletier-Rousseau, M., Bernier, R., Clarke Murray, C. et al. Assessment of recreational boating as a vector for marine non-indigenous species on the Atlantic coast of Canada. Biol Invasions 21, 2447–2470 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10530-019-01991-1>

Simard, N., Pelletier-Rousseau, M., Clarke Murray, C., McKindsey, C.W., Therriault, T.W., Lacoursière-Roussel, A., Bernier, R., Sephton, D., Drolet, D., Locke, A., Martin, J.L., Drake D.A.R., and McKenzie, C.H. 2017. National Risk Assessment of Recreational Boating as a Vector for Marine Non-indigenous Species. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Res. Doc. 2017/006. vi + 95 p. [National Risk Assessment of Recreational Boating as a Vector for Marine Non indigenous Species](https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/40601699.pdf)

[Survey of Attitudes, Knowledge and Behaviour in Relation to Non-native Species (PDF)](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/assets/Document-repository/2018_Survey_of_Attitudes_Knowledge_and_Behaviour_in_Relation_to_Non-native_Species-7.pdf) Report to GBNNSS. 2018.

Vye, S.R., Wynne-Jones, S., Masterson-Algar, P., Jenkins, S.R. Exploring perceptions of marine biosecurity interventions: insights from the commercial marina sector, Marine Policy, Volume 118, 2020, 104027, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104027>. [Exploring perceptions of marine biosecurity interventions: insights from the commercial marina sector - ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308597X19302222)

Requirement

Natural England would like to commission an interdisciplinary contractor team to determine the best methodology for estimating the current extent of fouling of marine recreational vessels in the UK, the patterns (routes and volume) of recreational boat movements in and out of UK waters, and within UK waters, and to better understand the factors that influence recreational boater decision and behaviours in relation to dealing with fouling.

We are looking for a contractor team that has a good in-depth knowledge of the UK marine environment and recreational marine sector as well as experience of social science methodologies. It is expected that the contractor would have demonstrably strong knowledge and experience of both quantitative and qualitative social science methodologies to be able to design a feasible, robust and cost-effective approach, including sampling design. Input from an experienced statistician is likely to be required to ensure that the methodology developed is able to provide well-justified estimates of recreational boat fouling.

This work will require the development and appropriate testing of as robust a methodology as possible to gather data on levels of cleaning, routes travelled and current practices and how collected data could be analysed in order to make an estimate of marine INNS introduction and spread in the UK by this pathway.

It is expected that any methodology developed should be a process that non-specialists could follow in terms of data collection. It is likely that an option for future data collection is the use of volunteers or non – specialist local staff and this should be a key consideration when developing the proposed methodology and recommendations for roll out.

**Note:** This RFQ is only for the development and testing of the methodology and recommendations for how future data collection could be achieved. The next stage of this project (2026 onwards) would involve the actual data collection, analysis and assessment (across the UK) and is funding dependent.

**Objective 1**: Short literature review to include:

* Review of potential methodologies for gathering this data and experience from similar sectors and other countries (see Reference list as a starting point for examples). To include an assessment of the pros and cons of different methods, likely difficulties, limitations and potential bias.
* Identification of existing relevant data if available on the current extent of recreational boating e.g. number of marinas, how many recreational boats visit the UK per year etc.
* Current mitigation and risk management practices in place in the UK for the marine recreational boating pathway (both into and around UK) including any existing evidence or published information on up take and effectiveness.

**Objective 2**: Development of a methodology e.g. through questionnaires, hull fouling surveys (e.g. using underwater cameras) etc that would provide as robust an estimate as is feasible of:

* The number of recreational boats currently coming to the UK that are fouled
* The number of recreational boats resident in UK waters that are fouled
* The current pattern of movements into and within UK waters
* Reasons for the current level of fouling – knowledge of best practice biosecurity and potential barriers for uptake

As previously highlighted, experience suggests that in-person engagement is likely to be the most effective. To develop a robust methodology, as well as drawing on the literature review and steering group, opportunities to interview those who have attempted similar projects elsewhere and/or key stakeholders could be considered.

As previously highlighted, it is likely that future data collection could be through local volunteers or staff such as MPA partnerships in Scotland for example. This needs to be a key consideration in the development of any methodology. It is expected however that future data analysis would likely be done separately by specialists.

It is expected that the final methodology developed should be easy to follow and cover:

* The approach
* Ethics processes
* Data collection protocols
* Sampling and recruitment processes
* How to analyse and make estimates/assessments on the final data

At least two options could be presented indicating what would be the minimum data collection required to make robust estimates plus a further option if more funding was available.

**Objective 3**: Investigation, consideration and recommendations on how the methodology could be practically rolled out and by who (e.g. volunteers, contractors or local staff) across the UK. This will require engagement with key stakeholders (e.g. Royal Yachting Association) and potentially a key group of marina operators to provide advice. Consideration of potential stakeholder fatigue from either past or concurrent similar projects involving recreational marine boaters will also need to be assessed and taken account of. Investigate whether there are any potential similar projects that data collection could join up with to reduce this burden.

**Objective 4** Carry out a real-world on-site pilot study or studies to test, review and adapt the methodology. The project steering group can provide advice on suggested locations. Note that testing of the protocol may be seasonal dependent – consideration needs to be made of level of fouling on boat hulls at different times of year and the boating season.

**Objective 5:** Develop and test a training package for staff who may be involved in future data collection.

**Key considerations:**

As well as referring to the information set out above in the background section, the following should be considered in developing your bid:

* Completion of an ethics checklist is mandatory for all Natural England research and evidence projects, or data collection, with people. Before commencing any data collection, an application for ethical review will need to be submitted (by the NE project manager with supporting information from the contractor) to the Natural England Research Ethics Committee for approval. This approval process usually takes around 2 weeks.
* This project is focussing on the risk of marine INNS transfer via recreational vessels (not including craft used for paddling and rowing activities). Recreational vessels are classed as being used for recreational activities (i.e. sailboats, yachts and powerboats) including those used for recreational angling or diving by individuals (excluding commercial operators). Larger commercial vessels including fishing vessels are out of scope although the proportion of different types of vessels using a marina may be useful to capture as part of the data collection.
* It is expected that the successful supplier would work closely with the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) for advice and support in engaging with the recreational boating community and marina operators.
* In Summer 2023 and 2024, the Marine Biological Association (MBA) carried out Rapid Assessment Surveys (RAS) for detection of priority marine non-native species in marinas and ports around the coasts of England and Wales. The 51 marina sites visited were all previously surveyed by the MBA in 2014-16. The report is not yet published but this data would be made available to the contractor for consideration on how it could be incorporated into the methodology and assessment.
* Hull fouling surveys are likely to be seasonally dependent with growth most likely during summer months and when boats are in use (June-October). Similarly engagement opportunities with boaters face to face will be determined by a number of factors including boating season, weather etc.

**Deliverables:**

1. Final report consisting of:
   1. Literature review
   2. Project results: process for developing the methodology, different options, results of pilot study/testing and recommended protocol (s), clear consideration of the limitations and potential bias.
2. Estimated cost options/recommendations for data collection in stage 2
3. Training package for future staff e.g. volunteers/partnership staff on how to follow the methodology and carry out data collection in the field. This should include FAQs that staff may be asked about the project and INNS in general. This could be in the form of a handbook and recorded supporting webinar. It is expected that this could be tested with a limited number of potential users before finalising.

The final report should be limited to 40 pages each (excluding annexes) and be provided in the NE publications template [Natural England publishing standards for commissioned reports - NECR000](https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5790636781600768)

Sustainability

Natural England protects and improves the environment and is committed to reducing the sustainability impacts of its activities directly and through its supply chains. We expect the Contractor to share this commitment and adopt a sound, proactive sustainable approach in keeping with the 25 yr environmental plan/our commitments compliant with all applicable legislation. This includes understanding and reducing direct and indirect sustainability impacts and realising opportunities, including but not restricted to; resilience to climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, water use and quality, biosecurity, resource efficiency and waste, reducing the risk of pollution, biodiversity, modern slavery and equality, diversity & inclusion, negative community impacts.

As a delivery partner, the successful contractor is expected to pursue sustainability in their operations, thereby ensuring the Contracting Authority is not contracting with a supplier whose operational outputs run contrary to the Contracting Authority’s objectives. The successful contractor will need to approach the project with a focus on the entire life cycle of the project

Outputs and Contract Management

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Suggested milestones | Dates |
| Draft literature review | October 2025 |
| Proposed methodology | December 2025 |
| Testing and review | January 2026 |
| Draft reports | February 2026 |
| Draft training package | February 2026 |
| Final reports | March 2026 |
| Final training package | March 2026 |

Start-up meeting between project officer and supplier: W/C 18th August 2025

Keep in touch via email every 2 weeks throughout project with the project steering group as well as at least 3 online project steering group meetings at key milestones. The project steering group will consist of Natural England (project manager), Natural Resources Wales, CEFAS, DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – Northern Ireland), Scottish Government, GB Non-Native Species Secretariat and RYA.

Final meeting: W/C 23rd March 2026

Payment

The Authority will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award.

The Authority’s preference is for all invoices to be sent electronically, quoting a valid Purchase Order number. Invoices can be submitted on completion and provision of evidence against set milestones to be agreed with the project manager.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 8 months to end no later than 31st March 2026. Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period. We may at our sole discretion extend this contract to include related or further work. Any extension shall be agreed in writing in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

Evaluation Methodology

We will award this contract in line with the most advantageous tender (MAT). See award criteria:

Technical – 70%

Commercial – 30%

**Evaluation criteria**

Evaluation weightings are 70% technical and 30% commercial, the winning tenderer will be the highest scoring combined score.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Award Criteria | Weighting (%) | Evaluation Topic & Weighting | Sub-Criteria | Weighted Question |
| Technical | 70% | Proposal | Methodology | 1 Questions  Q1.1 (40% of technical score available) |
| Staff experience and knowledge | 2 Question  Q2.1 (40% of technical score available)  Q2.2 (10% of technical score available) |
| Project management | 2 Questions  Q3.1 (5% of technical score available)  Q3.2 (5% of technical score available) |
| Commercial | 30% | Whole life cost of the proposed Contract | Commercial Model | 100% of commercial score available |

Technical (70%)

Technical evaluations will be based on responses to specific questions covering key criteria which are outlined below. Scores for questions will be based on the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description | Score | Definition |
| Very good | 100 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. There are no weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority complete confidence that all the requirements will be met to a high standard. |
| Good | 70 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains minor weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that all the requirements will be met to a good standard. |
| Moderate | 50 | Addresses most of the requirements with most of the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains moderate weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that most of the requirements will be met to a suitable standard. |
| Weak | 20 | Substantially addresses the requirements but not all and provides supporting information that is of limited or no relevance or a methodology containing significant weaknesses and therefore raises concerns for the Authority that the requirements may not all be met. |
| Unacceptable | 0 | No response or provides a response that gives the Authority no confidence that the requirement will be met. |

Technical evaluation is assessed using the evaluation topics and sub-criteria stated in the Evaluation Criteria section above.

Separate submissions for each technical question should be provided and will be evaluated in isolation. Tenderers should provide answers that meet the criteria of each technical question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Methodology | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q1. What methodology and approaches will you use to deliver the requirements of this project. What method do you propose to develop a robust methodology and how will you go about testing it?    Responses should not exceed 4 sides of A4, and use Arial font, size 11 | Your response should:   1. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of the requirements. 2. Be a clear, practical, achievable, and cost-effective methodology to deliver these requirements that includes an outline of the processes you will follow. 3. Provide a description of tasks and how you will approach them. 4. Outline what you think are likely to be the key methodological and implementation challenges that will need to be addressed in delivering this contract 5. Outline how you intend to work with Natural England staff and those from other organisations without adding to administrative burdens. 6. Have information in sufficient detail to allow a full appraisal of the suitability of the approach to deliver for the project. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Staff experience and knowledge | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q2.1 Who will be involved in the project and what relevant experience, skills and knowledge do they bring?    Responses should not exceed 3 sides of A4, and use Arial font, size 11. In addition, please include CVs. | Your response should demonstrate the team has:   1. Strong relevant experience, skills and knowledge to deliver this project to a high standard, in particular social science methodologies - design, sampling, methods, appropriate analysis and ethics. 2. An understanding of the subject matter and relevant stakeholders – a good in-depth knowledge of the UK, marine environment and recreational marine sector. 3. Produced high quality, accessible, imaginative and user-friendly outputs, including reports for non-academic audiences. |
| Q2.2 How much time will each staff member spend on the project and on which aspects?    Responses should not exceed 1 side of A4, and use Arial font, size 11.  Inclusion of a provisional project plan and gantt chart is additional to this limit. | Referring to the tasks/activities outlined, your response should demonstrate:   1. Sufficient time allowed for each stage and task 2. Staff with appropriate level of experience and knowledge involved in each stage and task |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project management | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q3.1 How will you manage the project to ensure delivery on time and to a high standard, taking into account sustainability considerations, and the following risks: engaging with sufficient stakeholders, continuity in the face of any staff absences?    Responses should not exceed 1 side of A4, and use Arial font, size 11. | Your response should briefly indicate:   1. How the project will be managed, by whom, and what measures will ensure successful delivery on time and to budget. 2. Any sustainability policies your organisation has and how these apply to this project 3. Risks to project delivery and how you would mitigate these including contingency plans for unexpected absence or changes to key personnel to minimise impact on project delivery. 4. Description of quality assurance processes in place to ensure quality of outputs. |
| Q3.2 What processes and experience do you have in relation to quality assurance, research ethics and data management?    Responses should not exceed 1 side of A4, and use Arial font, size 11. | Your response should briefly demonstrate:   1. Your quality assurance processes and measures 2. Your proposed data management processes 3. Any ethics processes your organisation has and any research ethics considerations that might apply in this project |

Commercial (30%)

The Contract is to be awarded as a fixed price which will be paid according to the completion of the deliverables stated in the Specification of Requirements.

Suppliers are required to submit a total cost to provide the deliverables stated in the Specification of Requirements. In addition to this the Commercial Response template must be completed to provide a breakdown of the whole life costs against each objective used in the delivery of this requirement.

Calculation Method

The method for calculating the individual weighted scores is as follows:

* Commercial

Score = (Lowest Quotation Price / Supplier’s Quotation Price ) x 30% (Maximum available marks)

* Technical

Score = (Bidder’s Total Technical Score / Highest Technical Score) x 70% (Maximum available marks)

The total score (weighted) (TWS) is then calculated by adding the total weighted commercial score (WC) to the total weighted technical score (WT): WC + WT = TWS.

Once all evaluators have completed their individual evaluations and provided their final scores, an average score will be calculated which will be multiplied by the selected weighting to give a weighted score representing the views of all evaluators.

Information to be returned

Please note, the following information requested must be provided. Incomplete tender submissions may be discounted.

Please complete and return the following information:

* completed Commercial Response template
* separate response submission for each technical question (in accordance with the response instructions)
* complete AI question [ ''Do you use Artificial Intelligence (AI) or machine learning tools, including large language models within your quote submission or service delivery processes.?''] response which will not be scored, is to be returned within technical response
* completed Mandatory Requirements (Annex 1)
* completed Acceptance of Terms and Conditions (Annex 2)

Award

Once the evaluation of the Response(s) is complete suppliers will be notified of the outcome via email.

The successful supplier will be issued the contract, incorporating their Response, for signature. The Authority will then counter sign.

Annex 1 Mandatory Requirements

Part 1 Potential Supplier Information

Please answer the following self-declaration questions in full and include this Annex in your quotation response.

Part 1.1 Potential Supplier Information:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 1.1(a) | Full name of the potential supplier submitting the information |  |
| 1.1(b) | Registered office address (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(c) | Company registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(d) | Charity registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(e) | Head office DUNS number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(f) | Registered VAT number |  |
| 1.1(g) | Are you a Small, Medium or Micro Enterprise (SME)? | (Yes / No) |

Note: See EU definition of SME <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en>

Part 1.2 Contact details and declaration

By submitting a quotation to this RFQ I declare that to the best of my knowledge the answers submitted and information contained in this document are correct and accurate.

I declare that, upon request and without delay you will provide the certificates or documentary evidence referred to in this document.

I understand that the information will be used in the selection process to assess my organisation’s suitability to be invited to participate further in this procurement.

I understand that the authority may reject this submission in its entirety if there is a failure to answer all the relevant questions fully, or if false/misleading information or content is provided in any section.

I am aware of the consequences of serious misrepresentation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 1.2(a) | Contact name |  |
| 1.2(b) | Name of organisation |  |
| 1.2(c) | Role in organisation |  |
| 1.2(d) | Phone number |  |
| 1.2(e) | E-mail address |  |
| 1.2(f) | Postal address |  |
| 1.2(g) | Signature (electronic is acceptable) |  |
| 1.2(h) | Date |  |

Part 2 Exclusion Grounds

Part 2.1 Grounds for mandatory exclusion, including being on the Government Debarment List.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 2.1(a) | Please indicate if, within the past five years you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation been convicted anywhere in the world of any of the offences within the summary below. | |
|  | Participation in a criminal organisation. | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Corruption. | ((Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Fraud. | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Money laundering or terrorist financing | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
| 2.1(b) | If you have answered yes to question 2.1(a), please provide further details.  Date of conviction, specify which of the grounds listed the conviction was for, and the reasons for conviction.  Identity of who has been convicted  If the relevant documentation is available electronically please provide the web address, issuing authority, precise reference of the documents. |  |
| 2.1 (c) | If you have answered Yes to any of the points above have measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (i.e. Self-Cleaning) | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(d) | Has it been established, for your organisation by a judicial or administrative decision having final and binding effect in accordance with the legal provisions of any part of the United Kingdom or the legal provisions of the country in which the organisation is established (if outside the UK), that the organisation is in breach of obligations related to the payment of tax or social security contributions? | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(e) | If you have answered yes to question 2.3(a), please provide further details. Please also confirm you have paid or have entered into a binding arrangement with a view to paying, the outstanding sum including where applicable any accrued interest and/or fines. |  |

Part 2.2 Grounds for discretionary exclusion

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 2.2(a) | The detailed grounds for discretionary exclusion of an organisation are set out on this [webpage](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551130/List_of_Mandatory_and_Discretionary_Exclusions.pdf), which should be referred to before completing these questions.  Please indicate if, within the past three years, anywhere in the world any of the following situations have applied to you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation | |
| 2.2(b) | Breach of environmental obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(c) | Breach of social obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(d) | Breach of labour law obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(e) | Shown significant or persistent deficiencies in the performance of a substantive requirement under a prior public contract, a prior contract with a contracting entity, or a prior concession contract, which led to early termination of that prior contract, damages or other comparable sanctions? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2 (f) | If you have answered Yes to any of the above, explain what measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (Self Cleaning) |  |

Annex 2 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

I/We accept in full the terms and conditions appended to this Request for Quote document.

Company \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Target 6 of the CBD is to ‘*eliminate, minimise, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50 per cent, by 2030, eradicating or controlling invasive alien species especially in priority sites, such as islands’*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [British Marine releases latest UK Marina and Mooring Market Report - The Yacht Harbour Association](https://www.tyha.co.uk/news/british-marine-releases-latest-uk-marina-and-mooring-market-report) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)