Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Bidder Pack

Procurement Specific Requirements

An Investigation into the Effects of the Tertiary Recycling Process on the Quality and Safety of Plastics

Tender Reference ITT C30694

October 2025

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Contents

Section 1: The Invitation

This procurement is being carried out by Defra group Commercial in accordance with the R&D Open Competition Procedure as set out in the Procurement Act 2023 and associated regulations on behalf of Core Defra.

The Bidder Pack comes in **two** parts:

The **first part**, **The Core Requirements**, provides details of the General Requirements, Government Transparency Agenda and Government Priorities.

The **second part**, **The Procurement Specific Requirements**, provides details of the Specification Requirements, Terms and Conditions of Contract, Evaluation Methodology, Procurement Timetable and Definitions.

The tendering process seeks to determine the Most Advantageous Tender (MAT). The Authority will evaluate the Tenders using the tender evaluation criteria and weightings listed in Section 4, Evaluation Methodology.

The Opportunity

This opportunity is advertised by Defra group Commercial on behalf of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate - VMD.

Within England, VMD contributes to Defra's objectives to protect public health and meet high standards of animal welfare. Our work also helps the Food Standards Agency to protect and improve the safety of food people eat.

Responsibilities:

- monitoring and acting on reports of adverse events from veterinary medicines
- testing for residues of veterinary medicines or illegal substances in animals and animal products
- assessing applications for and authorising companies to sell veterinary medicines
- controlling how veterinary medicines are made and distributed
- advising government ministers on developing veterinary medicines policy and putting it into action
- making, updating and enforcing the Veterinary Medicines Regulations

Quotation Submission

Details of the Technical and Commercial requirements can be located through the Atamis e-tendering portal (https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome).

Summary of requirement - The project investigates degradation products in recycled packaging, which could potentially affect the quality, safety and efficacy of veterinary medicines. Understanding these risks helps the VMD to outline guidance for safe use of recycled plastics, with an initial focus on blister packaging. The Plastic Packaging Tax (PPT) was introduced in the UK in 2022, with the aim to reduce plastic waste by promoting the use of recycled materials in plastic packaging. However, pharmaceutical primary packaging remains comprised of solely virgin (newly produced) materials. This is because the use of recycled plastics in primary packaging is largely prohibitive, due to concerns that degradation products will be present in the recycled plastic.

The aim of this research is to discover specifically what degradation products form during tertiary recycling of plastic packaging materials. Tertiary recycling methods for plastics involve breaking down the plastic waste into its chemical components. Once known, these materials can be assessed for risk. With the information gathered, a clear set of validation criteria and guidelines can be formed to support the use of recycled plastics in primary packaging. The findings will support the development of validation guidelines for recycled packaging, enabling companies to submit compliant applications for regulatory assessment. This streamlines the authorisation process and ensures packaging meets safety standards. By establishing safe use of recycled materials, the VMD can modernise and regulate packaging practices without compromising product integrity. The project addresses a current regulatory gap — lack of guidance on recycled packaging. Its outcomes will enable the VMD to update regulations, define acceptable degradation product levels, and enforce standards that support sustainability while maintaining safety.

Procurement Tender Process

The procurement tender timetable below is subject to change from time to time as notified by the Authority. All Tenderers will be informed via the Authority's eSourcing System.

https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome

Procurement Activity	Anticipated Date	
Publish Contracts Finder Notice and Bidder Pack	21st October 2025	
Clarification deadline	Date	Time
	14/11/2025	**14:00 GMT**
Bidder Pack / ITT response date	Date	Time

	21/11/2025	**12:00 GMT**
Issue Notification of Intention to Award letters	05/12/2025	
Standstill Period Start and End Date (8 Days)	N/A	
Contract award / contract issued	12/12/2025	
Contract Start Date	12/12/2025	
Service Commencement Date	12/12/2025	
Contract End Date	31/03/2026	

All timescales are set using a 24-hour clock and when referring to “days” it means calendar days unless otherwise specified (for example, working days).

Variant Tenders

The Authority shall not accept variant Tenders.

For the avoidance of doubt, if the Authority has reserved a right to waive a requirement in this Bidder Pack and chooses to exercise such discretion, the Tender will not be considered a variant Tender.

Abnormally Low Tenders or Pricing Anomalies

If the Authority considers your Tender to appear abnormally low, an initial assessment will be undertaken using a comparative analysis of the pricing proposals received from all Tenderers [and the Authority’s valuation of the procurement]. If that assessment indicates that your Tender is abnormally low the Authority will request a written explanation of your Tender, or of those parts of your Tender which the Authority considers contribute to your Tender being abnormally low. The Authority reserves the right to reject your Tender if the response does not satisfactorily account for the low level of price or costs proposed.

The assessment of abnormally low prices will be undertaken strictly in accordance with Section 19 of the Procurement Act, which outlines how abnormally low prices must be assessed and the circumstances in which the contracting authority can reject the tender.

Pricing Anomalies

If in the opinion of the Authority your Tender contains any pricing anomalies (for example apparent discrepancies between the financial submission and other parts of your response) the Authority may seek clarification. If the clarification response indicates that the pricing anomaly was the result of a clear and obvious error, in the interest of fairness the resulting change will be taken into consideration. If the clarification response results in a change to the initial tendered Commercial Response and price, it will not be taken into account.

Section 2: The Specification of Requirements

The Authority's Priorities

The Authority is The Veterinary Medicines Directorate on behalf of Defra, the UK Government Department responsible for the environment, food and farming and rural affairs. The Authorities' priorities are to secure a healthy natural environment; a sustainable, low-carbon economy; a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply i.e. meeting high standards of animal welfare. Further information on the Authority can be found at: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).](https://www.gov.uk)

Background and Policy Context

This R&D project is a strategic fit for the VMD's mission. It supports innovation, sustainability, and regulatory robustness, while enabling the VMD to remain proactive and pragmatic in addressing emerging industry challenges. It also enhances collaboration with stakeholders and other regulatory bodies, reinforcing the VMD's leadership in veterinary pharmaceutical regulation.

Scope - Overview of Requirement

We aim to fund a research initiative focused on the tertiary recycling of plastics used in pharmaceutical blister packaging. This project aims to investigate the impact of tertiary recycling processes on the quality, purity and degradation products of these plastics. The findings from this research will form foundations in assessing the potential risks associated with the use of recycled plastics in primary pharmaceutical packaging.

Blister packs used in veterinary medicine typically consist of multiple layers of plastics, laminated aluminium foil, commonly sealed with an aluminium backing, designed to protect individual doses from moisture, light, and contamination. Commonly used materials in blister packs include a number of plastics such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyvinylidene chloride (PVDC), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), polyamide or polyethylene laminates with aluminium.

The aim of this research is to discover viability of tertiary recycled plastics to be incorporated in immediate packaging of veterinary medicines, with the focus on blister pack materials. This involves a relevant literature review and a pilot study for the assessment of impurities that emerge during the tertiary recycling process. Tertiary recycling methods for plastics involve breaking down the plastic waste into its chemical components, followed by the reforming of the final polymer, so these can be used again. As the plastic is recycled, the pure components can degrade into what is known as 'degradation products'. There is a concern that these degradation products can affect the quality and safety of the packaging materials in various ways, however currently the actual risk of these degradation products in primary pharmaceutical packaging material (such as blisters) have not been sufficiently assessed. As sufficient research has not been performed to identify these risks, the industry has adopted an extremely cautious approach, with no recycled primary packaging material currently approved. However, both key stakeholders (marketing authorisation holders) and regulatory bodies identify the potential of recycled packaging materials and wish to become more sustainable. Collaborative not-for-profit organisations in the sector have been formed to promote the use of recycled packaging material. Additionally, it has been acknowledged by various regulatory bodies (Ph. Eur. 3.2.2.) that recycled material may be used if sufficient and appropriate validation is performed.

While recycled materials could be accepted with validation, with so little known about the degradation products, there is no validation guideline in place. This is one of the main barriers for the use of recycled materials, as without a clear framework in place outlining what the risks are from the use of recycled plastic and what is needed to mitigate these risks, stakeholders are unable to properly explore this possibility. Currently one of the main sources of information, for immediate packaging and appropriate testing, is the Guideline on Plastic Immediate Packaging Materials, formulated by European Medicines Agency (EMA). However, this needs to be accompanied by regulatory framework specific for the use of recycled packaging materials. With such specification guidance, the manufacturers would have a clear goal to aim for, and regulatory assessors would have a clear criterion to assess against, so safety aspects are not compromised. This research project is intended to lay foundations and inform the VMD to advance towards a possible formulation of regulatory validation guidelines.

VMD welcomes proposals from institutions with expertise in materials science, recycling of plastics, pharmaceutical packaging or similar expertise, and look forward to collaborating on this important initiative.

Requirements for University/ other Organisation Participation in Research Project

This research project seeks collaboration with academic or other institutions/ organisations to deliver high-quality, evidence-based outputs aligned with the scope of this project, i.e. assessing if tertiary recycled plastics could potentially be used in pharmaceutical blister packaging and the impact (of tertiary recycling processes) on the quality, purity and degradation products of these plastics. The following requirements outline the expectations for participating organisations:

1. Research Objectives and Deliverables

Universities/other organisations must demonstrate capability to contribute to the following objectives:

Desk based Work

- Literature review identifying what forms of plastics are used in pharmaceutical blister packaging and would be suitable for recycling.
- For each plastic form, research into current tertiary recycling practices for that plastic, to identify best means of breaking down the plastic into basic chemical building blocks, and subsequent reforming into recycled material.

Laboratory Work

- Pilot study, as a proof of concept, to discover how best to assess and compare impurities and degradation products in test plastic material both in its virgin state and after the tertiary recycling process of the same plastic.
- Submit a peer-reviewed article outlining findings of the pilot-scale product to the wider industry, to encourage additional research from stakeholders.

2. Mandatory Qualifications and Documentation

Participating universities/other organisations must include the following with their submission:

- Evidence of relevant academic and technical expertise and prior research experience.
- A proposed timeline, resource allocation plan and a brief project plan.
- It is expected that the participants will produce comprehensive reports detailing findings, methodologies, and recommendations. Deliverables must be clearly measurable and submitted according to the project timeline.
- Submission of a peer-reviewed article/communication outlining findings of the pilot-scale product to the wider industry, to encourage additional research from stakeholders.

3. Technical and Functional Requirements

- Given that highly specialised laboratory and analytical work is mandatory part of this research project, the participating universities/ organisations must sufficiently address their technical capability and instrumentation to perform such research activities and analysis in their proposal.
- This includes an overview of the possibilities to source materials used in the study, their existing ‘toolbox’ in terms of analytical options to determine composition and changes in recycled plastic materials, including degradation impurities, and a synopsis of the tools and techniques available to the university /other organisation for the tertiary recycling and reforming of test batches.

4. Intellectual Property and Collaboration

- All created works must be compatible with the use and sharing of the information by the VMD. Any third-party content incorporated must be appropriately licensed and documented.

- The participating university/other organisation would actively update the VMD on the project progress, allow for monitoring of the ongoing work. The VMD expects to collaboratively share findings with other national competent authorities and other stakeholders.

Sustainability

The VMD 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-year environmental plan and that our commitments are 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 tenderer 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 tenderer will need to approach the project with a focus on the entire life cycle of the project.

Further Sustainability Considerations

The successful tenderer will be expected to embed sustainability across all phases of the project life cycle—from raw material sourcing to end-of-use disposal—ensuring alignment with the Contracting Authority's (the VMD and Defra) environmental, economic, and social value objectives. Given the project's focus on tertiary recycling of plastics in veterinary blister packs, key sustainability risks such as microplastic pollution, carbon emissions from processing, and social impacts of waste handling must be identified and mitigated. Contractors must adhere to relevant policies and commitments including the Defra Group Sustainability Strategy, Environment Agency's eMission 2030, Timber Procurement Policy, and Greening Government Commitments. Compliance with standards such as carbon reduction, circular economy principles, pollution prevention, ethical sourcing, and modern slavery prevention is mandatory. Evidence of sustainability performance and policy adherence must be provided upon request to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the project.

Outputs and Contract Management

Reference	**Milestone**	**Responsible Party**	**Date of completion**	**Indicative Payment Schedule**
1	Initial meeting with the VMD	Participating university/organisation will invite the VMD to attend an online meeting to discuss the project, outlining subsequent steps towards successful completion of the project	**Within 1 month of contract start**	
2	Scoping literature review, project plan review	Participating university/organisation	2 months	
3	Interim report & Milestone meeting		3 months	**40%**
4	Final milestone meeting and report of findings. Submission of a final report to the VMD (EVID 4)		6 months End of a project	**60%**

Milestone meetings will be arranged by the VMD to monitor progress against the above milestones and objectives:

- Within 1 month of contract start
- Every [3] months throughout duration of contract
- Within 1 month of contract end

Proposed timelines

We envisage that this will be a 3-month project, ending on 31 March 2026.

Payment methods

A more precise schedule of payments will be agreed with the successful tenderer before the contract is awarded, the decision will take into account the risks associated with the project. The project will be priced by deliverable with no monies due to the contractor until we have accepted each deliverable and related invoice. The ITT will make it clear that this is a fixed price project with no price incentivisation or opportunities to reprice.

Quality Assurance

Evidence used in meeting the objectives has been collected, processed, and published with rigor and that appropriate quality assurance (QA) processes are in place, and embedded, within the contracting organisation. The Contractor will provide VMD with relevant assurances around QA procedures and/or certifications from recognised standards providers (e.g. ISO). VMD will review and assess quality assurance by internal peer review before final approval of outputs presented by the Contractor.

Accessibility

As a public body, any product that is published within the public domain must comply with the accessibility legislation. Please ensure that where the end product is to be published, reference is made to the following requirement which can be found here.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/publishing-accessible-documents

Anonymised recruitment

Anonymised recruitment removes the candidate's personal details from their application. The most common items include name, age, employee number, email address, home address, nationality, and immigration details. This supports diversity in the workforce. It helps to create a more level playing field in the assessment process.

Where procuring an opportunity that requires the provision of CVs, anonymised recruitment should be the default position.

Travel and Subsistence

All Travel and Subsistence should be in line with Defra's Travel and Subsistence Policy. Claims should always be supported by valid receipts for audit purposes and must not exceed any of the stated rates below. Should the stated rate be exceeded, Defra reserve the right to reimburse only up to the stated rate.

Rail Travel All Journeys

Standard class rail should be used unless a clear business case demonstrating value for money can be presented. This includes international rail journeys by Eurostar and other international and overseas rail operators.

Mileage Allowance

Mileage allowance	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Private cars and vans – no public transport rate*	45p	25p
Private cars and vans – public transport rate	25p	25p
Private motorcycles	24p	24p
Passenger supplement	5p	5p
Equipment supplement**	3p	3p
Bicycle	20p	20p

*NB the 'no public transport rate' for car and van travel can only be claimed where the use of a private vehicle for the journey is essential e.g., on grounds of disability or where there is no practical public transport alternative. If the use of the vehicle is not essential the 'public transport rate' should be claimed.
** Under HMRC rules this expense is taxable.

UK Subsistence

Location	Rate
London (Bed and Breakfast)	£160 per night + £20 buffer
UK Other (Bed and Breakfast)	£100 per night for all other locations +£20 buffer

Section 3: Terms and Conditions of Contract

The Terms and Conditions of Contract for this procurement are DgC standard conditions of contract for research and development using a R&D Order Form.
Research and development terms and conditions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Terms and Conditions are split into Core Terms and Contracting Authority Terms within the Annexes / Schedules, and details of the legal priority are similarly within the contract's Annexes/Schedules.

The contract will run until **31 March 2026**.

Suggested Changes to Conditions of Contract

Tenderers may raise clarification questions relating to the amendment of contract terms (Appendix B) during the clarification period only, as specified in the Timetable, if it can be demonstrated that there is a legal or statutory reason why they cannot be accepted. Where a legal or statutory reason cannot be substantiated the Authority has the right to reject the proposed changed. Such requests must follow the Clarifications Sought by the tenderer process set out in the Core Requirements element of this Bidder Pack.

Section 4: Evaluation Methodology

The overall aim of the evaluation process is to select the Tender that is the most advantageous (MAT) to the Authority, having regard to the Authority's overall objectives and the criteria set out below.

The Authority will carry out its evaluations of the Technical and Commercial elements according to the criteria, sub-criteria and weightings set out in the table below:

The Authority will carry out its evaluations of the **Technical (60%), Sustainability & Social Value (10%), and Commercial (30%)** elements according to the criteria, sub-criteria and weightings set out in the table below.

The Authority may refine the Evaluation criteria outlined in this Bidder Pack and related documents during the procurement process in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. This is to ensure that the criteria, sub-criteria and weightings remain aligned with the objectives and requirements of the project.

Any such refinements will be notified to all Tenderers in writing via the Authority's eSourcing System in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. Tenderers are encouraged to review the tender documents regularly for any updates.

Evaluation of Responses

Evaluation of Responses will be undertaken by a panel appointed by the Authority. Each panel member will first undertake an independent evaluation of the Responses applying the relevant evaluation criteria for each question. Then, a moderation meeting will be held at which the evaluation panel will reach a consensus on the marking of each question.

During the consensus meeting, the decision may be taken that a Response will not be carried forward to the next evaluation stage if the consensus view is that the Tenderer has failed to meet any minimum or mandatory requirements, and/or provided a non-compliant response.

Evaluation Criteria

Stage	Section Reference	Evaluation Criteria	Question Scoring/ Weighting (%)

Stage 1	Form of Tender	This stage is not scored but if you do not upload a complete, signed and dated Form of Tender in accordance with the instructions in Atamis, your Tender will be rejected as non-compliant.	**Pass/Fail**
Stage 2	Selection Stage:	This stage is designed to select those Tenderers who are suitable to deliver the Authority's requirements and will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out in Sections 1 to 5 of the response form in Atamis and Part 1 of this Section (in respect of economic and financial standing and technical and professional ability). Failure to meet the stated selection criteria will result in a Response being rejected at this stage and no further assessment of the remainder of the Response (including the Tender) pursuant to the remaining stages below will be undertaken by the Authority.	**Pass/Fail**
Stage 3	Technical & Professional Ability – Project Specific Requirements (Technical Questionnaire)	This stage will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out in the Technical Questionnaire. Some requirements are mandatory and if you cannot provide them your Tender may be rejected. Scored as 60% weighting of the total available score, consisting of the following breakdown of questions:	**Technical - Scored as 60%** weighting of the total available score, consisting of the following breakdown of questions: **Sustainability & Social Value - Scored as 10%** weighting of the total available score **<u>Technical</u>** **F01** – Health and Safety Weighting = 100% or **Pass/ Fail** **E01** - Approach & Methodology. Weighting = **40%**

			E02 – Quality Assurance & Reproducibility. Weighting = **20%** **E03** – Equipment and Expertise. Weighting = **20%** **E04** – Publication Strategy and Methodology. Weighting = **20%** **E05** – Sustainability and Social Value. Weighting = **100%** *See Related Evaluation Questions on Appendix C of the Bidder Pack/ITT*
Stage 4	Pricing Schedule	Prices will be evaluated in accordance with criteria set out in the Pricing Schedule on the ITT and Atamis. Tenderers will be required to submit the total fixed cost for completing the project and include a breakdown of costs as specified in the requirements. Costs will need to be reasonable and competitive and offer value for money.	**Overall Scored weighting 30%**

Stage 5	Final score / Award	A Response which passes stage 1 and 2 will proceed to evaluation of Tenders in accordance with stages 3 to 5. The final score is calculated as follows: Total Technical Quality Requirements will make up to a maximum of **60%** of total score. (Stage 3) Total Sustainability & Social Value Requirements will make up to a maximum of **10%** of total score. (Stage 3) Total Price Requirements will make up to a maximum of **30%** of total score. (Stage 4) The most advantageous tender (MAT) will be the Tender with the highest final score. (Stage 5)

Evaluation of Responses

Evaluation of Responses will be undertaken by a panel appointed by the Authority. Each panel member will first undertake an independent evaluation of the Responses applying the relevant evaluation criteria for each question. Then, a moderation meeting will be held at which the evaluation panel will reach a consensus on the marking of each question.

During the consensus meeting, the decision may be taken that a Response will not be carried forward to the next evaluation stage if the consensus view is that the Tenderer has failed to meet any minimum or mandatory requirements, and/or provided a non-compliant response.

Scoring Criteria

The following scoring criteria is to be used when evaluating responses to Stage 3 Technical Questionnaire. A tenderer's response will be assessed against the detailed criteria provided for each question [**E01 – E05**] and be assigned a Descriptor and score from the table below:

Descriptor	Score	Definition
Very good	**100**	Addresses all the Authority's requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the Bidder Pack. 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 Bidder Pack. 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 Bidder Pack. 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.

If you score 20 or less in respect of questions **E01 - E05** then you may be eliminated from the procurement. If a Tenderer receives a 'Fail' in question **F01** they will be eliminated from the procurement.

Calculation Method

For both elements, providing the bidder has met any mandatory criteria and minimum quality thresholds, the total weighted scores are calculated as follows:

Technical (WT)

First divide **Bidder's Total Technical Score** by the **Highest Technical Score available**, then multiply by the **Technical weighting** to get the **Technical weighted score.**

$$\frac{\text{Bidder's Total Technical Score}}{\text{Highest Technical Score}} \text{ X Technical Weighting = Technical weighted score}$$

Commercial (WC)

First divide **Lowest Commercial Score** by the **Bidder's Total Commercial Score**, then multiply by the **Commercial weighting** to get the **Commercial weighted score**

$$\frac{\text{Lowest Commercial Score}}{\text{Bidder's Total Commercial Score}} \text{ X Commercial Weighting = Commercial weighted score}$$

The Total Score (weighted) is then calculated by adding the Total Weighted Technical Score to the Total Weighted Commercial Score: **WT+ WC** or;

The following commercial calculation:

Score = **Lowest Tender Price** x 30% Maximum available marks

Tender Price

For example, if three Tender Responses are received and Tenderer A has quoted £3,000 as their total price, Tenderer B has quoted £5,000 and Tenderer C has quoted £6,000 then the calculation will be as follows:

Tenderer A Score = £3000/£3000 x 30% (Maximum available marks) = **30%**
Tenderer B Score = £3000/£5000 x 30% (Maximum available marks) = **18%**
Tenderer C Score = £3000/£6000 x 30% (Maximum available marks) = **15%**

The commercial evaluation will be based on total price and Tenderers will be required to provide a full price breakdown of the cost and matched against milestones in the commercial workbook.

Tenderers must provide a financial proposal, including rates and hours for each participating team member and costing analysed by work stages. The project is for a fixed cost. A breakdown of costs against each objective and against each key personnel including a detailed breakdown for equipment, consumables; overheads and travel costs are required. The Authority is keen to receive competitive Day Rates which must be set out in the "Commercial Workbook" (provided in the ITT pack); "Staff Costs" worksheet and ensure the details entered in the "Milestone" worksheet are that of the deliverables detailed in the specification.

The above is required to be uploaded to the 'Commercial Envelope' of Atamis.

Where subcontractors or joint contractors are used, a separate breakdown for each must be provided in addition to the overall project costs.

Day rates for all staff must be provided along with a general description of duties.

Tenderers will be required to submit a total fixed cost for completion of the project and include a breakdown of costs against each objective and against key personnel. Costs will need to be reasonable and competitive and offer value for money.

Please DO NOT include the commercial/pricing Schedule in your technical submission as you may not progress to the next stage of the procurement.

Commercial Pricing Breakdown applicable to this ITT is on Atamis. This should be downloaded; completed and attached to the commercial envelope.

***Please Note:**

*Tenderers must be aware that all bids are **submitted** in acceptance of agreed Defra's terms and conditions of contract for R&D. Any clarifications regarding terms and conditions must be discussed & agreed during the tender period. No discussion of terms and conditions of contract shall be held following tender submission. Failure to agree with the terms and conditions of contract post tender shall result in a bid being deemed non-compliant.*

Selection Questionnaire - Financial standing

The Authority will review the economic information provided as part of the Selection Questionnaire response to evaluate a Tenderer's economic and financial standing. The Authority's evaluation will be based on all the information reviewed and will not be determined by a single indicator. If, based on its assessment of the information provided in a Response, the Authority decides that a Tenderer does not meet the Authority's required level of economic standing, the Authority may:

- ask for additional information, including information relating to the Tenderer's parent company, if applicable; and/or
- require a parent company guarantee or a performance bond.

If the Authority decides that a parent company guarantee or performance bond is required, the Authority will reject a Response if the Tenderer is unable to offer a commitment to make such provision. In addition to the information provided in a Response, the Authority may, at its discretion, consult Dun & Bradstreet reports and other credit rating or equivalent reports depending on where a Tenderer is located.

The Authority's assessment of economic and financial standing will consider financial strength and risk of business failure. Financial strength is based on tangible net worth and is rated on a scale of 5A (strongest) to H (weakest) obtained from Dun & Bradstreet. There are also classifications for negative net worth and net worth undetermined (insufficient information). Financial strength will be assessed relative to the estimated annual contract value. Contractors should account for and highlight inflation in their bids.

The Authority will also consider annual turnover.
In the case of a joint venture or a consortium bid, the annual turnover is calculated by combining the turnover of the relevant organisations in each of the last two financial years.

Risk of Business Failure is rated on a scale of 1 (minimal) to 4 (significant) obtained from Dun & Bradstreet. There is also a classification of insufficient information. The Authority regards a score of 4 as indicating inadequate economic and financial standing for this procurement. The Authority will also calculate and evaluate the Tenderer's:

- operating performance: growth or reductions in sales, gross profit, operating profit, profit before tax and earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, amortisation, exceptional items and profit/loss on sale of businesses;
- liquidity: net current assets, movements in cash flow from operations, working capital and quick ratios, and average collection and payments periods; and
- financial structure: gearing ratios and interest cover.

Section 5: Performance Management Framework

1. Overview of the PMF

1.1. As part of the Authority's continuous drive to improve the performance of all Contractors, this PMF will be used to monitor, measure, and control all aspects of the Supplier's performance of contract responsibilities.

1.2. The purpose of PMF is to set out the obligations on the successful Contractor, to outline how the successful Contractor's performance will be monitored, evaluated and rectified for performance.

1.3. The Authority may define any reasonable performance management indicators for the Contractor under the following categories:

- Updates to Authority
- Data Handling
- Participatory Outputs
- Reports
- Presentations

1.4. The above categories are consistent with all Contract awards allowing the Authority to monitor Contractor' performance at both individual level and at the enterprise level with the individual Contractor.

2. Management of the PMF

2.1. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) shall be monitored on a regular basis and shall form part of the contract performance review. Performance of KPI's will be reported by the Contractor to the Authority on a monthly basis. The Contractor shall detail performance against KPI's at regularly agreed intervals with the Authority, who will review this and make comments if any.

2.2. The Contractor shall maintain their own management reports, including a Risk and Issues Log and present these as requested by the Authority at any meeting requested by the Authority.

2.3. Any performance issues highlighted in these reports will be addressed by the Contractor, who shall be required to provide an improvement plan ("Remediation Plan") to address all issues highlighted within a week of the Authority request.

2.4. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are essential in order to align Contractor's performance with the requirements of the Authority and to do so in a fair and practical way. KPIs must be realistic and achievable; they must also be met otherwise it will be taken as an indication that the Contractor is failing to deliver. The successful Contractor will ensure that failure and non-performance is quickly rectified.

2.5. The Authority reserves the right to amend the existing KPI’s detailed in section 6 below or add any new KPI’s. Any changes to the KPI’s shall be confirmed by way of a Contract Change Note.

Section 6: Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

KPI and deliverables	Measurement	Fail	Acceptable
1. Updates to Defra and the project steering group	Regular, and ad hoc, verbal and written updates summarising progress and challenges	Updates are infrequent or lacking enough detail to assure the Authority of progress	Updates are timely and include enough detail to assure the Authority of progress
2. Data handling	Secure, accessible and organised collecting and storage of data/information relating to the project	Data, information and files are not kept up-to-date and are unavailable	All project data and information are up-to-date and accessible to the Authority
a. Evidence review	Collection and storage of external and internal evidence sources, as well as any annotations / analysis	Evidence is only cited and not made available to the Authority	Evidence is gathered, stored and accessible to the Authority
b. Technical guidelines and draft standard	Collection and storage of data (for example, evidence of best practice techniques) used to develop technical guidelines and draft standard	Data is inadequate to achieve deliverable	Data is adequate and available to the Authority
3. Consultation outputs	Notes and final report describing consultation process and how views from peatland community shaped final standard	Notes and outputs are incomplete or missing	Notes and outputs are detailed and stored for future reference
4. Reports and knowledge exchange packs	Evidence review, Reports setting out methodology, final report and knowledge exchange packs	Reports are late, incomplete and do not adequately address feedback from the Authority or deliverables	Reports are on time, complete, incorporate comments and address all deliverables

5. Presentations and webinars	Presentation materials and delivery of key findings	Presentations do not take place or are inappropriate for the audeicne	Presentations take place, convey key findings clearly and ae targeted at correct audience
6. Technical guidelines and peatland standard	Technical guidelines and final peatland restoration standard	Products contain errors, are incomplete and do not meet the projects aims	Products are detailed, high quality, address feedback from the Authority, meet the project's aims, and are accessible with appropriate diagrams.

Section 7: Appendices

1. Definitions

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following words and expressions used within the Bidder Pack (except for Section 3: Terms and Conditions of Contract) shall have the following meanings to be interpreted in the singular or plural as the context requires.

TERM	MEANING
"Authority"	the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs acting as part of the Crown
"Bidder Pack"	this invitation to tender and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to tenderers.
"Contract"	the contract (set out in Appendix B) to be entered into by the Authority and the successful Tenderer.
"EIR"	the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (as amended) together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or any Government Department in relation to those Regulations.
"eSourcing system"	eSourcing system is the eSourcing system used by the Authority for conducting this procurement, which can be found at https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome
"FOIA"	the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as amended) and any subordinate legislation made under that Act together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or any Government Department in relation to that legislation.
"Form of Tender"	means the form contained in Annex 2 to the Procurement Specific section of the Bidder Pack which must be signed, scanned and uploaded into the Authority's eSourcing System by the Tenderer to indicate that it understands the Tender and accepts the various terms and conditions and other requirements of participating in the exercise.
"Information"	means the information contained in the Bidder Pack or sent with it, and any information which has been made available to the Tenderer by the Authority, its employees, agents or advisers in connection with the procurement.

TERM	MEANING
“Involved Person”	means any person who is either working for, or acting on behalf of, the Authority in connection with this procurement and/or the Contract including, without limitation, any officer, employee, advisor, agent, member, partner or consultant”.
“Pricing Schedule”	the form accessed via eSourcing system in which Tenderers are required to submit their pricing information as part of a Tender.
“Regulations”	the Procurement Act 2023 and associated regulations.
“Relevant Body	means any other organisation, body or government department that is working with or acting on behalf of the Authority in connection with this procurement and/or the Contract including, without limitation, its officers, employees, advisors, agents, members, partners or consultants.
“Response”	means the information submitted in response to the Bidder Pack via the online response forms on eSourcing system including the Tenderer’s formal Tender.
“Specification of Requirements”	the Authority’s requirements set out in Section 2 of the Bidder Pack Procurement Specific Requirements.
“Tender”	the formal offer to provide the goods or services descibed in section 1.1 of part 1 of the Bidder Pack and comprising the responses to the questions in eSourcing system and the Pricing Schedule.
“Tenderer”	anyone responding to the Bidder Pack and, where the context requires, includes a potential tenderer.
“Timetable”	the procurement timetable set out in Section 1 of the Bidder Pack Procurement Specific Requirements.

APPENDIX A

FORM OF TENDER

To be returned by 12:00pm (GMT time) on **21st November 2025**.

Procurement Advisor - Victor Mpehla
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Procurement and Commercial Function

TENDER FOR: **An Investigation into the Effects of the Tertiary Recycling Process on the Quality and Safety of Plastics.**

Tender Ref: Project/ITT **C30694**

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1. We have examined the invitation to tender, and its schedules set out below (the **ITT**) and do hereby offer to provide the goods and/or services specified in the ITT and in accordance with the attached documents to the Authority commencing date **12/12/2025** for the period specified in the ITT.

   - Tender Particulars (Section 1)
   - Specification of Requirements (Section 2)
   - Form of Tender (Appendix A)
   - Authority's Conditions of Contract (Appendix B)

2. If this tender is accepted, we will execute the Contract and any other documents required by the Authority within 10 days of being asked to do so.

3. We agree that:

   a. before executing the Contract substantially in the form set out in the ITT, the formal acceptance of this tender in writing by this Authority or such parts as may be specified, together with the documents attached shall comprise a binding contract between the Authority and us;

   b. pursuant to EU Directive 1999/93/EC (Community Framework for Electronic Signatures) and the Electronic Communications Act 2000, the Contract may be executed electronically using the Authority's electronic tendering and contract management system, Atamis;

   c. we are legally bound to comply with the confidentiality provisions set out in the ITT;

d. any other terms or conditions or any general reservation which may be provided in any correspondence sent by the Authority in connection with this procurement shall not form part of this tender without the prior written consent of the Authority;

e. this tender shall remain valid for 120 days from the closing date for tenders specified in the ITT; and

f. the Authority may disclose our information and documents (submitted to the Authority during the procurement) more widely within Government for the purpose of ensuring effective cross-Government procurement processes, including value for money and related purposes.

4. We confirm that:

a. there are no circumstances affecting our organisation which could give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest that would affect the integrity of the Authority's decision making in relation to the award of the Contract; or

b. if there are or may be such circumstances giving rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest, we have disclosed this in full to the Authority.

5. We undertake and it shall be a condition of the Contract that:

a. the amount of our tender has not been calculated by agreement or arrangement with any person other than the Authority and that the amount of our tender has not been communicated to any person until after the closing date for the submission of tenders and in any event not without the consent of the Authority;

b. we have not canvassed and will not, before the evaluation process, canvass or solicit any member or officer, employee or agent of the Authority or other contracting authority in connection with the award of the Contract and that no person employed by us has done or will do any such act; and

c. made arrangements with any other party about whether or not they may submit a tender except for the purposes of forming a joint venture.

6. I warrant that I am authorised to sign this tender and confirm that we have complied with all the requirements of the ITT.

Signed

____

Date

____

In the capacity of

Authorised to sign Tender for and on behalf of

____

Postal Address ______________________________________

Post Code ______________________________________

Telephone No. ______________________________________

Email Address ______________________________________

APPENDIX B

AUTHORITY'S CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

Located on the Authority's eSourcing system for information

The Terms and Conditions of Contract for this procurement are Research & Development Terms & Conditions and related Order Form.

Research and development terms and conditions - GOV.UK

APPENDIX C

TECHNICAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

In line with DEFRA policy, we will be awarding a contract to the Most Advantageous ITT response (MAT).

The overall score is broken down as follows: **60%** of the overall score will be awarded for technical criteria, **10%** for Sustainability and Social Value, and **30%** of the overall score will be awarded for commercial.

Please note responses will be assessed against demonstration of understanding of the Specification above.

Category	Criteria	Weighting	Description
Technical List out the sub-criteria and a brief description. Sub-weightings should be included **60%**	**E01: Approach & Methodology**	**40%**	Set out in detail the approach and methodology proposed to deliver the investigative study detailed in the 'Specification' section below. **Evaluation Criteria:** As part of your answer please provide the following: 1) Describe your interpretation of the project aims, the key scientific and regulatory questions you will answer, and the specific outputs you will deliver to enable VMD validation guidance for tertiary recycled blister plastics. 2) Outline your proposed methodology for the desk activities (literature review) and pilot laboratory work, including the sample selection, preparation, and tertiary recycling method selection and development. 3) Explain how you will select and source representative blister packaging materials and feedstock for tertiary recycling, how you will document provenance, and how your

			sample set will support generalisable conclusions for veterinary blister packs. 4) Describe your proposed analytical strategy to identify and quantify degradation products and impurities formed during tertiary recycling, including non-targeted screening (general quantification of impurities), targeted assays (identification and assay of individual impurities), limits of quantification, validation/qualification of methods. Please upload a document with the filename: E01 Your Company Name. Your response must be a maximum of four sides of A4, font size 10 addressing the above. Any responses exceeding four sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page.
	E02: Quality Assurance & Reproducibility	**20%**	**Evaluation Criteria:** Provide an overview of the following criteria: 1. Your quality management systems (ISO/GLP/GMP experience) 2. Data integrity controls, including laboratory information management systems or data storage plans 3. Method validation and steps employed to ensure reproducibility, traceability and handover of raw data to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate 4. Provide a proven record of experience in a related area of expertise and a project management, by listing your previous scientific publications in peer reviewed journals and your involvement in scientific projects. Additionally, explain how you will produce and maintain a log identifying risks and issues with mitigation measures. The risk log must be supplied

			to VMD in a clear format at each point of milestone completion, at project review points or on request. As part of your response please provide a draft risk log. Please upload a document with the filename: E02 Your Company Name. Your response must be a maximum of four sides of A4, font size 10 addressing the above. Any responses exceeding four sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page. Please include a Gantt chart separate to the main response and the four sides of A4
	E03: Equipment and Expertise	**20%**	**Evaluation Criteria:** 1. Please provide a summary of the analytical equipment and techniques that your organisation has access to, that would be pertinent to this investigation. For each equipment or technique, provide an explanation for how this may be potentially useful. If sub-contractors are commonly used in your research, and may support the delivery of this project, then a similar summary is expected for the sub-contractors. 2. Provide details of your organisation's proposed team, including the approach to recruiting an appropriate researcher. Additionally, include any sub-contractors and/or associates that may support the delivery of this project. 3. Include CVs for staff in post or role description for those yet to be recruited (note that this is additional to the page allowance for the proposal, and names can be anonymised if necessary). Include anticipated staff time spent on the project. This information shall be included in the cost

			proposal. Include a description of management structure and interdependencies with any proposed sub-contractors, plus indicate who will be the day-to-day contact on the project. Please upload a document with the filename: E03 Your Company Name. Your response must be a maximum of four sides of A4, font size 10 addressing the above. Any responses exceeding four sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page.
	E04: Publication Strategy and Methodology	**20%**	**Evaluation Criteria:** Describe your publication strategy and methodological reporting approach for this project, including: 1) Intended timeline for manuscript submission 2) Planned authorship and acknowledgement for VMD 3) Data sharing plans 4) Pre-submission peer review or quality checks 5) Handling of confidential or sensitive information 6) How rigorous reporting of both qualitative and quantitative results is ensured In support of your proposed methodology please provide examples of previous peer reviewed publications to demonstrate high quality reporting of qualitative and quantitative research in the physical chemistry sphere. Please upload a document with the filename: E04 Your Company Name. Your response must be a maximum of four sides of A4, font size 10 addressing the above. Any responses exceeding four sides of A4 will not be

			evaluated beyond the last page. Additional provided past publications are in addition to the stated page limit.
Sustainability and Social Value **10%**	**E05: Sustainability and Social Value**	**100%**	**Evaluation Criteria:** Describe how you will identify and mitigate the sustainability risks associated with this project (microplastic release, carbon footprint, waste handling, etc.) to comply with the DEFRA Group Sustainability Strategy and Environment Agency's eMission 2030, Timber Procurement Policy and Greening Government Commitments. Include an overview of how you aim to record evidence of sustainability performance and policy adherence should such evidence be required. A "Fail" will be allocated to a response that does not demonstrate any evidence of Sustainability and Social Value policies. Please upload a document with the filename: E05 Your Company Name. Your response must be a maximum of four sides of A4, font size 10 addressing the below questions. Any responses exceeding four sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page.
	F01: Health and Safety	**Pass/Fail**	**Evaluation Criteria:** Please provide a copy of your Health & Safety policy/statement and an example risk assessment from similar assignments. The risk assessment should identify associated risks, control or mitigation measures, and residual risk levels. Your response should provide details of suitably robust procedures for health and safety, including

			how they will ensure surveys will be conducted in a safe manner. Where the tenderer is of 5 employees or less, please provide some detail about health and safety in your organisation. How will health and safety considerations be implemented in the development of this contract? A “Fail” will be allocated to a response that does not demonstrate any evidence of addressing health and safety. Please upload a document with the filename: F01 Your Company Name, and any associated supporting documents. Your response must be a maximum of two sides of A4, font size 10 addressing the above. Any responses exceeding two sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the last page.
Commercial Evaluation Methodology – **30%**	Tenderers will be required to submit a total fixed cost for completion of the project and include a breakdown of costs against each objective and against key personnel. Costs will need to be reasonable and competitive and offer value for money. **Commercial Evaluation (WC)** First divide **Lowest Commercial Score** by the **Bidder’s Total Commercial Score**, then multiply by the **Commercial weighting** to get the **Commercial weighted score** $\frac{\text{Lowest Commercial Score}}{\text{Bidder's Total Commercial Score}}$ X Commercial Weighting = Commercial weighted score		

	The Total Score (weighted) is then calculated by adding the Total Weighted Technical Score to the Total Weighted Commercial Score: **WT+ WC or;** The following calculation: Score = Lowest Tender Price x 30% Maximum available marks Tender Price For example (values listed here are not representative of the values expected for this tender and are used for illustrative purposes only), if three Tender Responses are received and Tenderer A has quoted £3,000 as their total price, Tenderer B has quoted £5,000 and Tenderer C has quoted £6,000 then the calculation will be as follows: Tenderer A Score = £3000/£3000 x 30% (Maximum available marks) = 30% Tenderer B Score = £3000/£5000 x 30% (Maximum available marks) = 18% Tenderer C Score = £3000/£6000 x 30% (Maximum available marks) = 15% **No Commercial/Pricing shall be submitted on the Technical Envelope**

APPENDIX D

Commercially Sensitive Information (Attached)
Please re-produce and upload as an attachment on Atamis if applicable

TENDERER'S COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION	POTENTIAL IMPLICATION OF DISCLOSURE	DURATION OF COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION

APPENDIX E

PRICING SCHEDULE
For Completion (Available on Atamis. Please upload to Atamis)

APPENDIX F

Appendix F - Staff Time in Days Per Milestone Template
For Completion (Available on Atamis. Please upload to Atamis)