



Request for Quotation

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| Provision of : | Research on the identification and assessment of best practice in nature-based solutions for climate action and ecosystem restoration in Ireland |
| Contracting Authority: | Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the Climate Change Advisory Council |
| Issue date: | 26 th April 2023 |
| Closing Date for Queries info@climatecouncil.ie: | 8 th May 2023 |
| Closing Date for Quotations to info@climatecouncil.ie: | 11 th May 2023 |
| Contact for Queries: | info@climatecouncil.ie |
| Format for Submission of Quotation: | Email of word or pdf doc to info@climatecouncil.ie |



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1 About the Contracting Authority

1.1 The Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency ('EPA') seeks quotes for the provision of research services for the identification and assessment of best practice in nature-based solutions for climate action and ecosystem restoration in Ireland on behalf of the Climate Change Advisory Council ('the Council').

The Council was established under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.

The Council is an independent advisory body tasked with assessing and advising on how Ireland can achieve the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.

Under Section 9 (18) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, the EPA is to:

- (a) provide the Advisory Council with such services of a secretarial and administrative nature as is appropriate for the performance by the Advisory Council of its functions, and
- (b) permit the Advisory Council to avail of the use of its premises, or such part of its premises as, following consultation between the Advisory Council and the Agency, is considered appropriate, for the purposes of the performance by the Advisory Council of its functions.

The Council is mandated by legislation to undertake review of progress on addressing climate issues and produce an Annual Review. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (as amended) sets out the requirements for the Annual Review and Report under Section 12 of the legislation. The Act as amended sets out the Council's role in the production of advice on Carbon Budgets.

The Council has also established an Adaptation Committee that is tasked to provide advice and guidance to the Council for consideration on matters relating to climate change adaptation. This includes:

- national policy related to climate change adaptation, in particular the National Adaptation Framework, Sectoral and Local Adaptation Plans
- contributions on climate change adaptation for Council reports
- Council statements related to climate impacts, risks and vulnerabilities
- any other issues delegated to the Committee by the Council

The Council is made of 14 members, including a Chair. For more information about the Council, please see: <https://www.climatecouncil.ie/aboutus/councilmembers/>

The Council is supported by a full time Secretariat.

1.2 Geographical Distribution

The Climate Change Advisory Council Secretariat is based in:

- Regional Inspectorate Dublin: McCumiskey House, Richview, Clonskeagh Road, Dublin 14 & Clonskeagh Square, Dublin 14

- EPA Headquarters: Johnstown Castle Estate, Co. Wexford

1.3 Small and Medium Enterprise Participation

It is the policy of the Contracting Authority to encourage participation by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in this competition.

SMEs are encouraged to explore the possibilities of forming relationships with other SMEs or with larger enterprises to meet the financial, economic or technical capacity requirements of the competition, if required.

2 Scope of Requirement

2.1 Specification of Requirement

In follow up to a roundtable event held by the Adaptation Committee on nature-based solutions in November 2022, the Climate Change Advisory Council is undertaking further research on nature-based solutions and their role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. This requirement is for a small scale study to identify and assess best practice in nature-based solutions for climate action and ecosystem restoration in Ireland.

The United Nations Environment Assembly, in decision 5/5. (2022) on nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development, defined nature-based solutions as “actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits”. The essential role of nature-based solutions in contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development goals and climate action is also fully recognized in UNEA decision 5.5.

In December 2022, the UNFCCC COP27 recognized the importance of nature-based solutions in climate action for the first time, nature based solutions are a key element of several of the targets identified in the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as well as the EU Adaptation Strategy.

There is also increasing national reference to nature-based solutions, including in the 2023 National Climate Action Plan (AD/23/4 on options for the delivery of a National Implementation Strategy for Nature-Based Solutions), Citizen’s Assembly recommendations, Ireland’s programme of measures for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and through our national implementation of the Oskar Convention.

In this context, the identification of best practice nature-based solutions for application in different land uses and ecosystems across Ireland is important. The nature-based solutions identified should apply amongst others to:

- Urban and built environment
- Coastal and marine environments
- Agricultural land (grassland, cropland and horticulture)
- Forests (plantations, mixed, native woodlands)
- Peatlands
- Riverine and freshwater environments (flood relief, erosion prevention and water quality improvement aspects etc.)

The main deliverable from this study will be the identification and brief description of best and emerging good practices in terms of nature-based solutions applicable to different land uses and ecosystems in Ireland. The study will also assess how these nature-based solutions contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as both where applicable.

The list will be based on a synthesis of best and emerging good practices derived from literature review, consultations, case studies and the outcomes of projects implemented in Ireland as well as other countries, including those linked to Horizon Europe and others available from the OPPLA website (<https://oppla.eu>).

It is envisaged that this study will:

- Assist in building up the evidence base for nature-based solutions in Ireland;
- Contribute towards the mainstreaming of nature-based solutions across sectors; and
- Serve as a reference point for community groups, farmers, local authorities, NGOs, Government agencies, researchers etc. interested in applying nature-based solutions to climate-related challenges and opportunities.

The study is expected to be completed over a 2 month timeframe in close consultation with the Secretariat. Once it is at final draft stage, it will be shared with and presented to the Adaptation Committee for final comments and endorsement.

Given the nature of this study, the successful applicant is required to demonstrate the following level of experience and qualifications:

1. A minimum of a Masters Degree in biodiversity, environmental management, environmental sciences or other relevant academic fields
2. Demonstrable working experience in the field of climate change, biodiversity and nature-based solutions related research
3. Experience of working and consulting with multi-disciplinary teams of researchers and nature-based solutions practitioners.

2.2 Delivery

Final delivery of this study is expected via email in word and pdf format with hyperlinks as appropriate to info@climatecouncil.ie.

2.3 Options

Options for additional requirements which may arise, linked to the original requirement, will not be catered for this service.

2.4 Total Cost

Suppliers must complete the Quotation Response Document attached to the RFQ email indicating details of the cost and return this with their quote submission.

The evaluation of total cost for this contract will be based on a fixed fee. All office and staff overheads to be included in the fees and any expenses and travel costs must be estimated and included in fees.

Quotation costs will be scored in inverse proportion to the maximum score, which will be allocated to the lowest cost quotation.

All funding provided is inclusive of VAT, if it is applicable.

2.5 Review of Performance

A quality service is required under this contract. Therefore, performance will be continually monitored over the term of the contract. Cost competitiveness, performance, quality of service and turnaround time will be the main criteria for measuring performance.

2.5.1 Account Management

Economic operators submitting a quotation are required to nominate a dedicated account manager who will act as the main point of contact for the duration of the contract. This person shall have the authority to deal with all matters in relation to the contract and be responsible for the satisfactory delivery of the services required.

2.5.2 Invoicing

Invoices shall be submitted by the successful economic operator on a monthly basis for all costs incurred in the preceding month, or as otherwise agreed by the parties. All official invoices must quote a Contracting Authority purchase order number. All invoices which do not quote the relevant order number(s) will be returned to the service provider.

2.6 Award to Runner-Up

If for any reason, it is not possible to award the contract to the successful economic operator emerging from this competitive process, or if having awarded the contract, the Contracting Authority considers that the successful economic operator has not met its obligations, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award the contract to the next highest scoring economic operator on the basis of the terms advertised, at any time during the quotation validity period of 6 months.

3 Evaluation Criteria

3.1 Suitability

The Contracting Authority will only consider quotations from competent and financially sound and compliant economic operators. To this end, you are required to confirm the following by completing the self-declaration contained in the separate Quotation Response Document (QRD).

- (a) General economic operator information.
- (b) Confirmation of tax compliance.
- (c) Confirmation that the economic operator is appropriately insured.
- (d) Confirmation via declaration that the economic operator is not bankrupt, guilty of corruption, fraud, money laundering, membership of a criminal organisation, not involved in child labour and/or human trafficking and is fully compliant with all its statutory obligations.

3.1.1 General Declarations and Financial Capacity Requirements

Tenderers are required to provide information on the following in the Quotation Response Document. The criteria and rules outlined below are assessed on a pass/fail basis. Failure to comply with the requirements will result in the tender being considered inadmissible.

| General Information | |
|---|---|
| Provide contact and general information on the tendering organisation - company name, address and contact details for individual responsible for this tender and company overview as well as information on sub-contractors and consortium members if applicable. | |
| Declaration | |
| Complete the Declaration of Bona Fides as per Art. 57 of Directive 2014/24/EU as implemented by Regulation SI 284 of May 2016 and as contained in the Quotation Response Document. | |
| Complete the Declaration regarding compliance with relevant statutory obligations as contained in the Quotation Response Document. Where tenderers are established and operating outside of the jurisdiction of supply, compliance with equivalent legislation as applicable in the country of establishment / operation is required. | |
| Financial and Economic Standing | |
| Tax | Confirmation that the tenderer / all parties associated with the tenderer are fully tax compliant. Please refer to the tax rules contained in the Tender Response Document. |
| Turnover and Financial Standing | <p>(a) Confirmation that the tendering party turnover exceeded €18,000 during one/each of the last three years or pro-rata if more recently established firms are tendering – however the firm must have been in existence for at least 6 months.</p> <p>(b) Confirmation of financial standing ensuring the tendering party has the financial capacity to pay its debts identified on the current statement of assets and liabilities as being the debts as they fall due.</p> <p>Evidence of both statements will be required prior to the award of any contract.</p> |
| Insurance | Confirmation of the following insurances being in place: |
| Insurance Type | Required Level |
| Employer's Liability* | €13 million |
| Public Liability | €6.5 million |

*note: n/a if sole trader

3.2 Award Criteria

The contract will be awarded based on a quality and cost evaluation as assessed by the Contracting Authority, who is not obliged to accept the lowest or indeed any quotation. The following criteria will be applied:

| Criterion A | Weighting | Maximum Marks | Minimum Marks |
|-------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 30% | 3000 | n/a |
| Title | Total Cost | | |

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| Description | <p>Tenderers must complete the Quotation Response Document (QRD).</p> <p>For the purposes of evaluation, tenderers should provide an all inclusive total cost (including expenses) for completion of the initial contract, along with information as required within the Tender Response Document.</p> | | |
| Criterion B | Weighting | Maximum Marks | Minimum Marks (60%) |
| | 30% | 3000 | 1800 |
| Title | Relevant Expertise and Experience | | |
| Description | <p>Provide a list of relevant work undertaken (research relating to policy and practice linked to nature based solutions; biodiversity conservation and management; climate change) in the past 5 years.</p> <p>Provide information on the expertise of the lead contact and any staff that will be involved in the study as appropriate</p> | | |
| Criterion C | Weighting | Maximum Marks | Minimum Marks (60%) |
| | 30% | 3000 | 1800 |
| Title | Methodology and Approach | | |
| Description | <p>Demonstrate the technical merit of the proposed approach and methodology for delivering the services specified.</p> <p>Propose a detailed project programme from inception to completion outlining the various stages of work with key identified milestones to ensure delivery of the services.</p> | | |
| Criterion D | Weighting | Maximum Marks | Minimum Marks (60%) |
| | 10% | 1000 | 600 |
| Title | Sustainability | | |
| Description | <p>Ireland has committed to implementing green public procurement (GPP) in all tenders using public funds by 2023. The EPA and Climate Change Advisory Council supports this transition by ensuring that the application of sustainable initiatives remains at the forefront of all procurement processes. Please demonstrate, in your response, how you will champion sustainability in delivery of the services outlined.</p> <p>Proposed measures may include but will not be limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) use of recycled products and paperless solutions as part of the contract; b) energy & equipment conservation solutions; c) use of technology for the purposes of meetings reducing the need to travel. | | |

4 Format of Response

Service Providers are required to complete the separate **Quotation Response Document** which contains:

- (a) General economic operator Information
- (b) Information regarding compliance with the Suitability Criteria – tax, insurances and declarations
- (c) The Quotation Form and where relevant response to the Qualitative Award Criteria

Please ensure you read the Instructions to Economic operators Quoting as detailed in Section 5.

5 Instructions for Economic Operators Quoting

5.1 Closing Date

The closing date for receipt of quotations is listed on the title page of this document. Quotations that are received late will not be considered in this competition.

5.2 Submission of Quotations

Quotations must be submitted to info@climatecouncil.ie. Submissions must also be marked as “Quotations” and include the Title of the Quotation.

5.3 Queries

All queries regarding this quotation must be submitted to info@climatecouncil.ie. Queries must also be made as “**Query for Quotations**” and with the name of the Provision of Service as indicated on the title page.

Queries should be raised as soon as possible and, in any case, at least 3 days before the closing date.

For the purpose of circulating responses, queries will be edited to avoid disclosing the identity of the querist, and any sensitive information included in the query should be clearly indicated.

5.4 Currency and Payments

The currency and invoices in which all prices and rates shall be quoted, and which payments under the contract will be paid, shall be Euros (€). All prices and rates quoted should be exclusive of VAT, if it is applicable.

A schedule of payments will be agreed with the successful economic operator. The Contracting Authority operates in accordance with the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2012.

The standard method of payment used is Electronic Funds Transfer.

5.5 Confidentiality

The distribution of the quotation documents is for the sole purpose of obtaining offers. The distribution does not grant permission or licence to use the documents for any other purpose.



Economic operators are required to treat the details of all documents supplied in connection with the quotation process as private and confidential.

5.6 Conflict of Interest

Any conflict of interest involving an economic operator (or economic operators in the event of a consortium bid) must be fully disclosed to the Contracting Authority. Any registrable interest involving the economic operator and The Contracting Authority or employees of the Contracting Authority or their relatives must be fully disclosed in the quotation submission or should be communicated to the Contracting Authority immediately upon such information becoming known to the economic operator, in the event of this information only coming to their notice after the submission of a bid and prior to the award of the contract. The terms 'registrable interest' and 'relative' shall be interpreted as per Section 2 of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may disqualify an economic operator or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict of interest comes to light.

5.7 Freedom of Information Acts

Economic operators should be aware that, under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2014, information provided by them during this Competition may be liable to be disclosed.

Economic operators are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in their Quotation should not be disclosed because of its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity. If economic operators consider that certain information is not to be disclosed because of its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity, economic operators must, when providing such information, clearly identify the specific sections of their quotation containing such information and specify the reasons for its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity. For the avoidance of doubt economic operators may not assert confidentiality or commercial sensitivity over the entire quotation but must clearly identify the specific section containing such information. If economic operators do not identify information as confidential or commercially sensitive, it is liable to be released in response to a request under the above legislation without further notice to or consultation with the economic operator. The Contracting Authority will, where possible, consult with economic operators about confidential or commercially sensitive information so identified before making its decision on a request received. The Contracting Authority accepts no liability whatsoever in respect of any information provided which is subsequently released (irrespective of notification) or in respect of any consequential damage suffered as a result of such obligations.

5.8 Data Protection

Data Protection Laws” means all applicable national and EU data protection laws, regulations and guidelines including but not limited to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (the “General Data Protection Regulation”), the Data Protection Act, 2018 and any guidelines and codes of practice issued by the Data Protection Commission or other supervisory authority for data protection in Ireland from time to time.

The Contracting Authority will be a Controller (where Controller has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) in respect of any Personal Data (where Personal Data has the

meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) required to be provided by the Tenderer in response to this Request for Quotation.

The Tenderer, as Controller in respect of any Personal Data provided by it in its Tender, is required to confirm by way of statement in the “Declarations” section of the accompanying Quotation Response Document (QRD) that all Data Subjects (where Data Subject has the meaning given under the Data Protection Laws) whose Personal Data is provided by the Tenderer have consented to the processing of such Personal Data by the Tenderer, the Contracting Authority, the Evaluation Team and the supplier of the etenders.gov.ie website, for the purposes of the participation of the Tenderer in this Competition or that the Tenderer otherwise has a legal basis for providing such Personal Data to the Contracting Authority for the purposes of its participation in this Competition.

5.9 Tax Clearance Certificate

It will be a condition of award of this contract and any subsequent contract that the successful economic operator(s) comply with all EU and national tax laws. Economic operators are referred to the Irish Revenue web site <http://www.revenue.ie/>. Non-resident economic operators should apply to the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Non-Resident Tax Clearance Unit, Office of the Collector General, Sarsfield House, Francis Street, Limerick, Ireland; email: nonrestaxclearance@revenue.ie

5.10 Withholding Tax

Relevant payments shall be subject to Irish ‘Professional Services Withholding Tax’ at the prevailing rate (currently at 20%) as laid down by the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland. Non-residents may be able to reclaim such deducted Tax from the Office of the Revenue Commissioners in Ireland, International Claims Section located currently at Government Buildings, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, Ireland (Tel: +353 (0) 67 63400).

5.11 Interference and Inducement to Purchase

Any effort by the economic operator to unduly influence the Contracting Authority, relevant agency personnel or any other relevant persons or bodies in the process of examination, clarification, evaluation and comparison of quotations and in decisions concerning the Award of Contract shall have their quotation rejected. In accordance with the Criminal Justice Act 2018 (Ireland), any money, gift or other consideration from a person holding or seeking to obtain a contract will be deemed to have been paid or given corruptly unless the contrary is proved.

5.12 Notification of Evaluations

All parties will be informed of the outcome of their proposals following evaluation and any necessary clarifications.

5.13 Award to Runner-Up

If for any reason, it is not possible to award the contract to the designated successful party emerging from this competitive process, or if having awarded the contract, the Contracting Authority considers that the successful party has not met its obligations, the Contracting Authority reserves the right during the quotation validity period to award the contract to the next highest scoring party on the basis of the terms advertised without re-opening the

competition. This shall be without prejudice to the right of the Contracting Authority to cancel this competitive process and/or initiate a new contract award procedure at its sole discretion.

5.14 Replacement Personnel

Notification must be sent in writing (by post or electronic means) as soon as possible to the Contracting Authority on any proposed change of nominated personnel, such change to be subject to the written approval of the Contracting Authority. Replacement personnel must be of equal or better standing than the existing personnel in terms of qualifications and experience.

5.15 Copyright

The Contracting Authority will have copyright ownership of any material developed for use by the Contracting Authority under the terms of this quotation. The service provider may have a non-exclusive licence to use such material but only for its own purposes (to be agreed with the successful economic operator).

5.16 Responsibility of Successful Party

As a condition of award, it shall be the sole responsibility of the tenderer (in the event of success in this competition) to fulfil the obligations under the Contract, notwithstanding any changes in circulars, laws, regulations, taxation, duties or other factors which might arise following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from membership of the EU.

5.17 Restrictive measures in the context of Russian actions in the Ukraine

In the light of Russian actions in the Ukraine, the European Council adopted a new regulation – EU Regulation 2022/576, aimed at restricting participation in economic activity by economic operators from the Russian Federation. Article 5K of the Regulation prohibits the award or continuation of contracts falling within the scope of the Public Procurement Directives to persons or undertakings related to the Russian Federation. To comply with EU Regulation 2022/576, the EPA is seeking a declaration from economic operators as part of the bid response process.