

Invitation to Tender

For a Consultant to lead on the Development of a Biodiversity Monitoring Model for the 'New Life on the Old West' project



Procurement is being undertaken by Cambridgeshire ACRE

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INTRODUCTION

Cambridgeshire ACRE is managing the development stage of the 'New Life on the Old West' project, which is being funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

This project seeks to establish connectivity and ecological resilience in the Cambridgeshire Fens between the core wetland nature reserves: National Trust's Wicken Fen and RSPB's Ouse Fen and Ouse Washes. It will do so by creating stepping stones of restored and enhanced small-scale habitats along a corridor centred on the Old West River, benefiting a range of habitats and species. Re-connecting dispersed species and restoring ecological processes will be achieved through habitat improvements on the network of fenland ditches and other waterbodies, farmland and community green spaces.

There will be new opportunities for local people to discover, experience, and appreciate their fenland natural heritage and green spaces. This should increase their sense of connection to fenland wildlife and to others within their community, engender a desire to become determined and enthusiastic stewards of their local environment, and an inspiration to other communities within the fens, and beyond.

During the development stage, we wish to contract a suitability qualified consultant to design and implement a monitoring protocol to guide and measure the project's delivery; for use by all project partners.

BIODIVERSITY MONITORING MODEL DEVELOPMENT

During the delivery phase (exp. May- September 2019 to April-August 2022), the project aims to create and enhance a large number (140+) of ecological stepping-stones in the area through small-scale habitat improvements on the network of fenland waterbodies, farmland and community green spaces. This will be accompanied by a citizen science programme to provide new information on the presence of species in the area.

The project focus will be primarily on fenland aquatic plant and invertebrate species, but will also include other rare, fen-restricted, or fen-associated plants and invertebrates, birds, reptiles and amphibians, and mammals. We will require methods designed for amateur specialists, to monitor aquatic plant and beetles, and also for "flagship species" to be monitored by local communities. "Flagship species" should be readily identifiable and either endangered, and/or "charismatic", and/or locally characteristic. These "flagship species" (numbering approximately 20) will help to ensure that the monitoring protocols for local communities are simple, repeatable, comparable, and representative.

A large number of conservation organisations involved in land and water management are partners in the development and delivery of the project. These, as well as related initiatives including the Fens for the Future Partnership, the Local Nature Partnership for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the Cambridge Conservation Forum, are keen to showcase the demonstration sites created through the project and promote these as exemplars of good management practice. The project's results will be used to influence and inspire other landowners, farmers, Internal Drainage Boards and community green space management committees to adopt similar management practices to benefit both the wildlife and the well-being of people.

In order to promote the project as a model for others to adopt and learn from, it will be essential that the success of the project's delivery elements can be measured against indicators of success and means of verification. All involved in project delivery are keen to develop a comprehensive monitoring model that is based on established methodology, with tools that ensure evidence-based measurement of the impact of the project's activities on the targeted habitats and species.

It is envisaged that the proposed Biodiversity Monitoring Model will include habitat condition monitoring, recording the presence and abundance of species, fixed point photography and (potentially) filming. The partners involved are keen to include other survey methods, including e-DNA and rapid water quality

sampling, as well as relatively new technologies such as drone imagery and Kite Aerial Photography, in the process also gathering useful digital visual outputs to be used for online promotion and community engagement.

SPECIFICATION OF TASKS TO BE COMPLETED

Cambridgeshire ACRE seeks an experienced consultant, to work closely with the project's Biodiversity Technical Group, to develop a monitoring programme to measure and evaluate the impact of biodiversity-focused work delivered through the project. The framework should enable the continued evaluation of the project's legacy for 10 years beyond its official delivery end point.

The development stage work towards the Biodiversity Monitoring Model requires a schedule of work to deliver a number of key tasks:

General Points: The consultant will:

- Ensure that relevant published and emerging evidence relating to conservation management techniques for the habitats and species targeted by this project are used to inform project management and monitoring.
- Ensure that the Monitoring Model and tools proposed can be understood and used by all partners involved, including conservation organisations, Internal Drainage Boards, landowners and local community green space management committees. The project will involve hundreds of local volunteers many of whom will be involved in research, hands-on habitat improvement creations, and site monitoring, so the site monitoring protocol devised must be clear enough to be followed by all.
- The protocol should prioritise monitoring (in order of importance): 1.) The area and quality of habitat at each site (including water quality if the habitat is aquatic) 2.) The presence or absence of flagship species at each site 3.) The presence or absence of other fenland-associated species 4.) The species richness and abundance of aquatic plants and beetles at individual sites, across the project area, and within the adjacent wetland reserves.
- We would ideally seek to have the monitoring framework supported by managers at RSPB Ouse Fen, RSPB Ouse Washes and National Trust Wicken Fen, and for it (or elements of it) to be implemented on their reserves, either through their resources, or through the volunteers we provide.
- Over the 10 year legacy period, we hope to find evidence of species colonising sites within the project area and increasing within the wetland reserves as indicative evidence that the project ambition of creating effective habitat corridors is being achieved. We would like the proposed framework to include criteria by which we can assess this.
- The biodiversity monitoring techniques used should be based on existing protocols that have been shown to be successful.
- Make sure that the implementation of the model can be easily overseen by Cambridgeshire ACRE, and has been agreed on conjunction with the Biodiversity Technical Group that has been set up for this purpose.
- Make sure that the implementation of the Model will link in neatly with the proposed citizen science sub-project (to include survey techniques such as e-DNA, water quality sampling and drone site monitoring), working closely with the partners leading on this programme.
- Work closely with Cambridgeshire ACRE to make sure the monitoring recommendations align with and are being developed in tandem with the project-wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to be further developed during the development phase for the project as a whole; an outline Framework has been developed as part of the stage 1 bid. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will enable evaluation of the success of the project against the outcomes set for heritage, people and communities, and for sharing of the learning with others.
- Work closely with Cambridgeshire ACRE to make sure the monitoring recommendations are developed in tandem and aligned with the whole Project Implementation and Management and Maintenance Plan to be written during the development phase.
- Work closely with Cambridgeshire ACRE to ensure that the monitoring recommendations align with the brief for external evaluation of the project. Throughout the delivery phase, the project will have an external evaluator involved who will be working towards an evaluation report for the project as a whole, a

key element of which will be evaluating the success of the Biodiversity Monitoring Model, through this also directly feeding into the project's legacy planning and ongoing management and maintenance arrangements.

Please note that we welcome your ideas if you believe there are better general approaches to developing the Biodiversity Monitoring Framework to those listed above.

Tasks: More specifically, the consultant will:

1. Work closely with relevant organisations, to provide a comprehensive overview of the status of relevant habitats and species in the area, selecting sets of comparable and representative baseline data, including control sites, to be used to measure against throughout project delivery. (Separately, we are commissioning surveys of aquatic beetles in certain parishes to ensure that we have a comprehensive data set. Baseline data on water quality and the presence or absence of amphibians, fish and other species will be obtained early in the delivery phase through the citizen science sub-project).
2. Work closely with the Biodiversity Technical Group and other relevant organisations involved, to select and make clear recommendations for a selection of indicators of achievement – with associated tools and targets - to be employed during project delivery to evaluate the impact of the project.
3. Come up with a clear system to collate all monitoring data and to ensure these are compatible to existing relevant biodiversity datasets, particularly those gathered from the Ouse Fen, Ouse Washes and Wicken Fen reserves. The consultant is to make sure that the protocol proposed can be used and adapted to improve data gathering and information exchange on habitats and species in the project area, especially those for aquatic plant and invertebrates, which are indicators of the distinctive and vulnerable natural heritage in the area.
4. Work with relevant partners to set out a clear path as to how the project's monitoring and data gathering mechanisms proposed should lead to improved access to datasets for public use, helping local communities and landowners with their ongoing wildlife-friendly maintenance and management work.
5. Work with the Biodiversity Technical Group and Cambridgeshire ACRE to set out a path how the model proposed could provide evidence what impact the c. 40 demonstration sites created will deliver for natural heritage, both at local sites and across the project area, to enhance biodiversity. In addition, the consultant will need to set out what legacy opportunities can be pursued, to ensure land in the project area will be appropriately managed and stewarded going forward.
6. Work with the Biodiversity Technical Group and Cambridgeshire ACRE to devise a route map which shows how the proposed model can ensure that long-term benefits for habitats and species in the area could be sustained beyond the life of the project. This should include recommendations for ongoing monitoring and data collation arrangements and responsibilities, how others can learn from the demonstration sites, and for integration into wider conservation work through related initiatives covering the project area.
7. Hold a briefing/workshop session (likely to be a day) for all relevant partners and specialists to discuss and agree the proposed protocol and monitoring tool to be used to measure the outcomes and impact of the project.

Please note that we welcome your ideas if you believe there are more appropriate actions to developing the Biodiversity Monitoring Framework to those listed above

Upon completion of these tasks the key expected output is a comprehensive guide to be used by Cambridgeshire ACRE and the partnership involved in delivery of the 'New Life on the Old West' project, detailing all the above-required information to inform and provide a clear approach for the delivery phase of the project. This report should include an illustrated executive summary written in a way that it can be use as a stand-alone document to promote the results to others.

EXPECTED METHODOLOGY

It is anticipated that the work will include both desk and field-based research.

Engaging all those individuals, stakeholders and local organisations involved in the project is essential for agreeing and devising the most suitable and manageable Biodiversity Monitoring Model. Please therefore allow for sufficient time in your costings to be spent with relevant organisations and specialists working on the project.

Cambridgeshire ACRE will provide support with contact data and introductions to partners, where needed.

The work must take into consideration all current legislation which would affect the project, including Nature Conservation, Health and Safety, Environmental Health, Licensing regulations, Disability Discrimination.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The contract for this work will be managed by Mark Nokkert, Programme Development Manager at Cambridgeshire ACRE. The nominated contact person on a daily basis will be Will Birkin, Senior Project Officer for the 'New Life on the Old West' project at Cambridgeshire ACRE.

The consultant will be expected to work closely with Cambridgeshire ACRE staff, providing regular updates and attending meetings to provide an overview of the work as it progresses.

A half-day inception meeting will be held at the start of the project to discuss the work and provide for the development of an agreed workplan to guide the work, timing and expectations. Please allow time for this meeting and development of a workplan in your costings.

At the start of the development phase we will convene a Biodiversity Technical Group – with biodiversity specialists from all relevant conservation and land and water management organisations involved - to guide the development, and then delivery, of the Biodiversity Monitoring Model. The Project Steering Group will, in addition, provide governance and oversight to the project development, ensuring strong legacy development is written into the details of the Model.

The consultant will be expected to work closely with all relevant partners and most importantly the Technical Expert Group, providing regular updates and attending meetings to provide an overview of the work as it progresses.

TIMETABLE

It is anticipated that this work will take around six months to complete. All work and any final outputs must be completed and handed over to Cambridgeshire ACRE by 31 October 2018 to allow time for the HLF stage two application to be developed. Please provide a summary of key milestones and completion dates covering the duration of the work.

BUDGET

The maximum value of this contract is £17,500, which must include all VAT and expenses you incur. Cambridgeshire ACRE cannot exceed this amount.

Please provide information on your daily rate, VAT and the number of days of time allocated to each of the specified tasks to be undertaken as part of the work.

PREPARATION OF TENDERS

Tenders are expected to cover the following:

- Relevant experience and competency possessed to complete the work.
- Biographies of any staff that will complete the work.
- Examples of similar work completed successfully elsewhere.
- The methods to be used for the development of each of the nine key tasks and how each of these will feed into the Biodiversity Monitoring Model to be written in the report.
- Proposals for approaches to working with all relevant partners involved.
- A simple risk analysis of any issues or barriers foreseen in undertaking the work successfully.
- Full costs and expenses including information on daily rates, VAT and the amount of days of time allocated to each of the key specific tasks to be undertaken as part of the work.
- A breakdown of key milestones and their expected completion dates.
- Contact details of two people who are willing to provide references regarding similar work undertaken over the last 3 years.

SELECTION OF TENDERS

Cambridgeshire ACRE has a formal 'Policy on Choosing Consultants, Contractors and Suppliers' a copy of which is provided alongside this Invitation to Tender.

Cambridgeshire ACRE will set a scoring system to allow it to determine and select the best value for money tender, with a panel of both staff and trustees involved in this process. Shortlisted consultants will be invited to an interview where a short presentation will be required detailing how the work will be undertaken.

SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

If you wish to discuss the requirements of the tender further, then please contact Mark Nokkert, Programme Development Manager on tel: 01353 865030 or via email at, mark.nokkert@cambisacre.org.uk.

Please submit your tender (in MS Word or PDF format) by email to Alison Brown, Head of Business Services at Cambridgeshire ACRE, by 12am on Sunday 24 June 2018 via alison.brown@cambisacre.org.uk. Late submissions will not be accepted.

DATA PROTECTION

Cambridgeshire ACRE has put measures in place to ensure it is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that came into effect on 25 May 2018.

Our Data Protection Policy (copy provided) sets out the measures with which all parties working on its behalf should comply. Any personal data shared by Cambridgeshire ACRE with the successful consultant must be handled in accordance with these measures.

The GDPR states that we should only contract with a processor who can provide sufficient guarantees that the requirements of the GDPR will be met and the rights of data subjects protected. The successful consultant will therefore be asked to complete Cambridgeshire ACRE's 'Data Protection Supplier Compliance Questionnaire' as a way of providing the necessary assurances.