

WOODLAND CREATION CONSULTANT
CONTRACT SPECIFICATION AND SERVICES DESCRIPTION
INVITATION TO TENDER

THE ORGANISATION

The North Devon UNESCO Biosphere is an important meeting place of rich natural and cultural heritage in a stunning world-class environment from dunes, grassland and moors, towns and villages to 12 miles beyond Lundy Island into the Bristol Channel. From seals and red deer to the diversity of our rolling countryside, coastal regions and marine habitats, our UNESCO biosphere reserve celebrates life by recognising the connections between people and nature.

As part of the global MAB network, our Biosphere provides an open forum for bringing people together with their natural surroundings, to empower them to unlock their potential and using their local and scientific knowledge to model solutions for sustainable living.

We seek to inspire people to restore connections to their land and share a way of living with nature that builds a positive future we can be proud of. People living in this landscape can demonstrate their way of living with nature through a number of different projects that conserve this precious area, build community wealth and life quality all whilst contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our Biosphere is also a vibrant landscape for scientific research and is host to a number of ecological and natural capital pilots, including two Pioneer Programmes as part of the 25 Year Environment Plan. One current research projects include Environmental Intelligence technology, using AI and launching a marketplace for natural capital projects, helping landowners implement nature-based projects and be remunerated for their efforts.

The North Devon Biosphere Foundation is dedicated to furthering the aims of the UNESCO North Devon Biosphere Reserve Partnership. It is committed to the strategy and action plan of the partnership and works closely with all partners in the Biosphere.

SCHEDULE 1:

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Devon Woods is a 6-year partnership currently in year two, which will create up to of 350ha woodland across a network of sites. The project will be for the benefit of improved water quality but will also sequester carbon, reduce flood risk and enhance biodiversity.

This is a partnership between the Environment Agency, North Devon Biosphere Foundation, Natural England, Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust. It will deliver woodland creation, enhanced woodland management and infrastructure specifically to achieve Water Framework Directive (WFD) outcomes, with multiple benefits to flood risk and biodiversity.

The project will provide the resource to engage landowners and support them in creating woodland through a suite of existing incentives (e.g. England Woodland Creation Offer), specific small grants for

rural Sustainable Drainage Systems and Natural Flood Management measures alongside forest infrastructure such as access roads. These will be delivered or facilitated through advice and guidance by this partnership project.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this project is to improve water quality in Devon catchments over 6 years, driving measurable improvements at a waterbody scale and thereby delivering the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan. This will be achieved by addressing sources of runoff associated with farming through tree planting and woodland establishment and management.

The project will create a minimum 158ha and estimated maximum of 350ha (not restricted) of woodland, targeting waterbodies that are failing to meet Water Framework Directives objectives where land use is the dominant pressure on water quality.

The project will increase and support existing biodiversity and reverse a decline in the area of woodland across the county. It will:

- Engage with a minimum 200 landowners, supporting their adoption of agricultural practices that improve the water management regime for the land that is under their stewardship. This target is based on our experience in Wood4Water project, scaled to Devon Woods.
- Deliver reductions in flood risk for target waterbodies aligned with the Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) programme, with full engagement with FCRM teams including PSO.

3. SERVICE OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES

This contract will be responsible for delivering high quality tree planting advice and schemes in Devon, including negotiating and managing contracts, you will work in partnership with the Environment Agency, conservation organisations and landowners and lead on the delivery of planting schemes that bring benefits for both people and wildlife.

- a. To provide advice and scheme design for tree planting and woodland creation
- b. To liaise and develop planting schemes with partner organisations such as the Environment Agency, with Devon Wildlife Trust (through their Natural Solutions project) and Westcountry Rivers Trust (through their Woodlands for Water project) to support landowners more widely
- c. Advice to landowners on Countryside Stewardship, Environmental Land Management Schemes, Environment Agency regulation and the England Woodland Creation Offer.
- d. Assisting or work on behalf of landowners in completing grant application forms
- e. To carry out promotional and engagement activities and provide advice and support
- f. Services to landowners to encourage their participation in tree planting, woodland creation, flood alleviation and related habitat creation

- g. Advice on reduction in runoff where source apportionment indicates high nutrient loads are driven by diffuse pollution from land use
- h. Advice on rural sustainable drainage systems (RSuDS), natural flood management interventions and suitable land management recommendations
- i. Support landowners through the delivery process, monitor the results, and feed this information back into the project management cycle.
- j. Creation of community planting schemes such as the Queen's Green Canopy tree planting initiative
- k. Manage and delegate contracts and consultants and the development and delivery of projects with their local environmental organisations
- l. Preparation of contract specification and funding bids, tendering, managing project pipeline, compliance, and monitoring of quality tree planting schemes
- m. Provide up to date and relevant information and evidence to support Biosphere Foundation grant claims
- n. Managing, monitoring and reporting against project budgets in accordance with requirements of funding agencies.
- o. Creating at least 158 ha of new, multi-purpose woodland across Devon
- p. Regular meeting attendance usually at least bi-weekly attendance as agreed
- q. Attend weekly biosphere contract and project progress meetings
- r. Feed into and review risk management decisions
- s. Working alongside project partners to facilitate specialist surveys, permits, and acquire land drainage consents
- t. Collaborate with the Project Manager using project specific software (Monday.com)
- u. Collaborate with and support the project manager with preparation for stakeholder meetings
- v. Participate in relevant stakeholder meetings representing the Biosphere
- x. Reporting to the project manager through Highlights Report based on assigned Work Package
- y. Other activities consummate with the contract and North Devon Biosphere project

4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

Frequent communication project updates via email or Agile style stand-up meetings during the contract to the Project Manager. Any key decisions made must be documented by the Contractor. All project data, reports and any other project related information must be maintained in an agreed location on the Biosphere Reserve Server and/or Devon County Council SharePoint site.

NB: Whilst under-taking the above activities, Contractor must follow all COVID-19 related rules, restrictions and safe-guarding practices. A Risk Assessment must be agreed with the Biosphere Project Manager.

5. CONTRACTOR SKILL COMPETENCIES:

With significant practical experience of delivering high quality tree planting schemes, including negotiating and managing contracts, you will work in partnership with the Environment Agency, local authorities, conservation organisations and landowners and lead on the delivery of planting schemes that bring benefits for both people and wildlife.

Knowledge, Skills and Experience	Essential/ Desirable
Forestry Degree/Diploma	E
Good understanding of UK forestry standards, and current best practice in biodiversity-led forestry	E
2+ years forestry experience.	E
Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) Member Or other related professional body	E
Design of woodland creation plans. Woodland creation design must include broadleaved native woodlands	E
Experienced in woodland establishment	E
Experience in managing woodland contractors including specification, procurement and project management implementation	E
Experienced in negotiating and managing contracts	E
Managing budgets and grant claims	E
IT competent including use of MS Office and management of spreadsheets	E
Good knowledge of native tree and shrub species	E
Experience in using ARC Pro GIS for habitat mapping	E
Experience in completing EWCO applications	E
Awareness of different habitat types and associated management techniques	E
Experience writing woodland creation plans	D
Experience in preparing Woodland Carbon Code Planning Design Documents	D
Experience writing woodland management plans	D
Experienced in woodland operations advice for restoration of woodlands	D
Experience in partaking in practical regeneration of woodlands including coppicing, felling and designing restorations schemes	D
Awareness of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)	D
Awareness of and experience in preparation of Woodland Creation Planning Grants	D
Awareness of natural flood management techniques and interventions	D
Understanding of biodiversity net gain, its principles, and opportunities for the rural environment	D
Trained in undertaking Phase 1 Baseline Habitat Surveys or Extended Phase 1 Habitat Baseline Surveys	D
Trained in botanical identification, Botany Society of Britain Field Identification Skill Certificate (FISC) ID Level 3 and upwards.	D

SCHEDULE 2: AGREED FEES AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Equivalent Hours: 1FTE

Contract Term: Length of contract 18 months. 1 month break clause is in place by which either party must give one month's notice to terminate the contract.

Subject to conditions, this position may be renewed or become a permanent position.

Contract value: £35,000 pro rata (inclusive of VAT, if applicable) £2,917/ month

Payment made on satisfactory completion of activities detailed in Schedule 1 and in accordance of this agreement.

Payments made upon receipt of monthly invoice(s).

Please apply with your CV and covering letter explaining your skills and abilities and method statement for the contract by 31st October:

[Application form \(monday.com\)](https://monday.com)

CONTRACT AWARD CRITERIA:

- Value for Money based on target fee
- The qualifications; experience or reputation of the respondent
- Experience of successful delivery of previous procurements
- Environmental and sustainability credentials of the respondent and the
- Method of delivery