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## **Aquaculture Social Licensing and Acceptability 2024**

Engagement with stakeholders, feasibility assessments, scoping of licensing system

## **Invitation to Tender - brief for potential contractors**

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# Aquaculture Social Licensing and Acceptability Study

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## **Background**

The North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (NDBR) is embarking on an initiative to support an aquaculture programme with the primary goal of stimulating local stewardship over the industry. This initiative aims to contribute significantly to the enhancement of the local economy, bolster food security, and promote environmental health in the region. In collaboration with key partners, namely The Crown Estate and the University of Plymouth the NDBR has identified up to 25km<sup>2</sup> of seabed as feasible for seaweed, bivalve, and crustacean aquaculture.

To date, significant progress has been made in the form of environmental feasibility studies, though hydrographic modelling has not yet been incorporated. Additionally, a comprehensive review of a potential block licensing framework has been undertaken which has explored key opportunities for establishing more efficient and accessible licensing process. Commercially viable activities identified thus far include suspended seaweed farming, suspended bivalve farming, and bottom-based crustacean farming. Notably, preliminary research has indicated that suspended seaweed aquaculture yields the lowest environmental impact. However, design alterations are needed to mitigate potential impacts from other aquaculture types.

Moving forward, the next phase of the project will focus on understanding social licensing within the local context. This involves delving into the intricacies of how these aquaculture activities align with and contribute to the local economy, community well-being, and environmental health. The multifaceted nature of these impacts necessitates a comprehensive refinement of the project scope based on ongoing feasibility studies. A future ambition is to streamline the licensing process, a critical measure designed to offer robust support to local businesses and facilitate the development of sustainable aquaculture ventures.

It is crucial to recognize that the success of these aquaculture initiatives hinges on addressing various challenges. Beyond the growth phase, attention must be directed towards the processing of aquaculture products and accessing markets, which often present formidable hurdles. Moreover, the degree of demand for and acceptance of such activities in the area remains uncertain and warrants further exploration.

To ensure the integration of local perspectives, additional engagement with key stakeholders such as local fishers and participants in recreational water activities is imperative. Their insights and collaboration will be instrumental in navigating the complex landscape of aquaculture development in North Devon. As the NDBR endeavours to build a sustainable and inclusive aquaculture program, ongoing efforts will be directed towards addressing these challenges, refining project scope, and fostering community support for a thriving and resilient local aquaculture industry.

You can find the North Devon Biosphere Reserve boundaries here:

<https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/biosphere-map.html>

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## Specification

**Title:** Aquaculture Social Licensing and Acceptability Study

### **1** OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To investigate the best social avenues for commercial ventures to develop and implement sustainable aquaculture businesses within Biosphere for the benefit of (and acceptance by) local communities.

### **2** SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

#### **Social License**

Objective 1.1: To identify relevant social license indicators for full aquaculture value chains in the region.

Through a comprehensive analysis, this objective aims to pinpoint key metrics and criteria that will serve as benchmarks for assessing the social acceptability and legitimacy of aquaculture activities at every stage of the value chain. By identifying these indicators, the initiative seeks to create a robust framework for evaluating and enhancing social license within the context of local aquaculture development.

The target value for this objective is £2,000

Objective 1.2: To understand the drivers and barriers to obtaining social license for the scales of aquaculture identified as feasible in the region

By thoroughly understanding the drivers and barriers associated with social license, the initiative aims to uncover the factors that either propel or hinder community acceptance and support for aquaculture ventures. This involves a nuanced examination of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental considerations that play a pivotal role in shaping public perception. Ultimately, the objective seeks to provide insights that will inform strategic approaches to navigate and overcome barriers while capitalizing on drivers to secure social license for sustainable aquaculture development.

The target value for this objective is £10,000

#### **Communications**

Objective 2.1: To develop a communications plan which addresses the needs of social licensing for the proposed aquaculture in the area

The goal is to create a well-structured and effective plan that addresses key communication challenges, engages stakeholders, and communicates the benefits and considerations associated with the aquaculture projects. By aligning communication efforts with social licensing needs, this objective seeks to foster understanding, transparency, and community support, crucial elements in establishing a positive rapport for the aquaculture developments.

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The target value for this objective is £2,000

Objective 2.2: Identify the next steps to implement the communications plan

Building on the communications plan developed in Objective 2.1, this objective involves the identification and articulation of the specific steps required to put the communications plan into action. This includes determining key milestones, allocating resources, and defining roles and responsibilities. By identifying the next steps, the objective aims to ensure a seamless and effective execution of the communication plan, maximizing its impact in building awareness, gaining community trust, and ultimately obtaining the necessary social license for the proposed aquaculture initiatives in the area. This objective does not include the implementation of the Communications Plan.

The target value for this objective is £1,000

## **Contractual arrangements**

The contract for this work will be with the North Devon Biosphere Reserve Foundation (NDBF), as lead body for the project.

Contracts for the work will be drafted. It is important to note at this stage that contracts will include:

- Agreement to provide all information secured through the contract to the (NDBF)
- Agreement that all intellectual rights will be held by the North Devon Biosphere Foundation
- Agreement that the contractor will be bound by the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and relevant employment law
- Agreement that the contractor will provide Public Liability Insurance for the contract.

## **Set-up and monitoring**

There will be 1 initiation meeting with the NDBR Marine Project Coordinator and partners. The initiation meeting with the contractor will be held to clarify the information needs and serve as a briefing meeting for the successful contractor.

The meeting will be an opportunity for the client to present previous and ongoing work to ensure that the contractor avoids duplication. The contractor will be expected to present any external materials required to undertake their proposed methodology as outlined in their proposal.

The contractor should take a participatory approach to their methodology.

We encourage sharing of data and materials from the work of the contractor to be shared with partners to improve targeting in the future and to record impact. It is expected that the contractor will have their own monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to assess the impact of their work. This should be proportionate to the contracted deliverables and reporting on M&E should be included in the final report.

## **Milestones and reporting**

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Applications are invited to undertake the above work by contract for the period January to March 2024. This will include an inception meeting, regular monitoring meetings/performance reviews and correspondence with local Project Manager. **All work must be completed by no later than 30 April 2024.**

See Table 2 below for milestone and deliverable target dates.

A final report is required and must provide:

- Overview of the activities completed
- Synopsis of pre-existing work completed
- Description of the methodologies used
- Limitations and challenges faced throughout the project
- Overall assessment of impact of the project and effectiveness of methods used
- Recommendations for next steps and further actions to progress this work.

## Guidelines for tendering

Tenders will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Skills/knowledge of proposed deliverers in target geographical areas\* – 50%
- Value for Money – 30%
- Capacity to deliver – 10%
- Proposed approach to delivery – 10%

\*Evaluation will be based on an assessment of the CVs held for proposed deliverers specified for each priority area (plus any supplementary information on these individuals contained in tender bids) against the skills/knowledge requirements for the contract (as set out in this specification).

Please note we are not obliged to accept the lowest tender, or any. The contract may be awarded to single or broken down to multiple suppliers.

To submit a tender please provide a *fee* with:

- A brief outline methodology
- CVs of all personnel to be involved in the delivery of the contract - demonstrating the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to make it a success.

## Target fee:

The available budget for this contract, per key objective, is listed in Table 1, total maximum target fee is **£15,000**.

The NDBR is not VAT registered, therefore please provide all budget information inclusive of VAT. Reimbursements for travel expenses and all other costs should be included within the above figure.

The project needs to commence during February 2024 so we request tenders are sent electronically to [chloe.nunn@devon.gov.uk](mailto:chloe.nunn@devon.gov.uk) **no later than 5pm on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2024.**

For all queries please contact:  
Chloe Nunn  
North Devon Biosphere Service

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**Table 1 – Programme objectives: delivery and fee targets**

Obj	Task description	Details	Expected Timescale		Target fee
			Start Date	End Date	£
1.1	Social license indicators	Provision of a database of social license indicators across target areas including proposed methodologies	Mid Feb 2024	Late Feb 2024	£2,000.00
1.2	Social license report	Detailed report of the social license study	Late Feb 2024	Early Apr 2024	£10,000.00
2.1	Communication Plan outline	High level outline of the communications plan	Mid Apr 2024	Mid Apr 2024	£500.00
2.1	Communication Plan	Complete communications plan in accessible and visually appealing format	Mid Apr 2024	Late Apr 2024	£1,500.00
2.2	Communication Action Plan	Appendix to the communication plan detailing next steps for implementation	Late Apr 2024	Late Apr 2024	£1,000.00
N/A	Final Report	Summary report as detailed above due upon the conclusion of the project		End April	N/A
<b>Total Fee</b>					<b>£15,000</b>