



## **Invitation to Tender (ITT): Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) Reintroduction Feasibility Study**

### 1. Executive Summary

**Title:** Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) Reintroduction Feasibility Study

**Issuing Authority:** East Devon National Landscape (part of East Devon District Council)

**Date of Issue:** 24<sup>th</sup> July 2026

**Tender Submission Deadline:** 12am on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2026

### 2. Introduction & Background

The East Devon National Landscape is seeking proposals from qualified environmental marine consultants to conduct a detailed Stage 1 desk-based assessment. This study will evaluate the feasibility of reintroducing the European Flat Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) into the coastal waters and estuaries of East Devon.

Native oysters are critical ecosystem engineers that have declined significantly across Europe. This project aims to determine if restoration is viable within our waters, aligning with regional priorities like the East Devon National Landscape Management Plan, emerging East Devon Nature Recovery Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategies. This will help deliver the against the Government 30x30 Target to protect 30% of land and sea for wildlife by 2030.

### 3. Study Area

The geographic scope of this desk-based assessment covers the coastal waters and intertidal zones from Lyme Regis (including the whole of Lyme Regis - Eastern boundary) to the Exe Estuary (Western boundary).

- The assessment must include all intermediate estuaries, specifically the Exe Estuary, Otter Estuary, Sid Estuary and Axe Estuary.
- It must span from the upper tidal limits of these estuaries across the whole coastline of the East Devon National Landscape out to the 12-nautical-mile territorial waters limit, prioritising shallow coastal zones suitable for *Ostrea edulis* (up to 80m depth).





## 4. Scope of Work & Key Deliverables

The successful supplier will deliver a comprehensive, evidence-based report divided into three core pillars:

### Pillar 1: Ecological and Physical Feasibility

- **Environmental Data Modelling:** Synthesise baseline data including water temperature, salinity, bathymetry, substrate types (availability of cultch), sediment dynamics, hydrodynamic flow & other relevant factors (such as vulnerability to coastal erosion)
- **Previous Native Oyster Restoration Projects:** Synthesise learning from relevant, recent (last 5-10 years) native oyster reintroduction projects around United Kingdom and apply findings to this study
- **Water Quality & Pollution Pressures:** Map risks related to harmful algal blooms, agricultural run-off (nitrates/phosphates), and sewage/industrial discharges across the estuaries.
- **Biosecurity & Disease:** Assess the regional prevalence of pests and pathogens, specifically *Bonamia ostreae* and *Marteilia refringens*, and map current disease control zones.
- **Historical Range Assessment:** Review historical archives, fisheries data, and academic papers to map the historical presence of oyster reefs in Lyme Bay and the estuaries overlaid with zonation of existing seagrass, saltmarsh & kelp beds.

### Pillar 2: Socio-Economic Feasibility and Stakeholder Mapping

- **Commercial and Recreational Sea Users:** Map potential spatial conflicts and synergies with appropriate users, e.g. commercial fishing (specifically bottom-towed gear), wild shellfisheries, angling and recreational boating.
- **Regulators and Landowners:** Identify and consult key statutory stakeholders (e.g., Devon & Severn IFCA, Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation) and major coastal landowners.

### Pillar 3: Blue Carbon Synergy and Strategic Roadmap





- **Habitat Cross-Referencing:** Overlay potential oyster restoration zones with existing blue carbon and protected habitats, including seagrass meadows (*Zostera marina*), saltmarshes, and kelp beds.
- **Natural Capital Potential:** Frame potential outcomes against UK marine BNG frameworks and UK voluntary blue carbon markets.
- **Prioritisation Matrix:** Rank potential restoration sites based on ecological viability and socio-economic co-benefits.
- **Data Gap Analysis:** Identify critical localised uncertainties requiring Stage 2 field surveys.

## 5. Required Output

- **Final Feasibility Report:** A detailed PDF report including a traffic-light suitability matrix for potential reintroduction sites ready for Stage 2 implementation.
- **GIS Data Package:** Clean, fully attributed shapefiles or Geodatabases mapping environmental constraints, blue carbon layers, and recommended "Restoration Boxes".
- **Executive Summary:** A highly visual, 4-page non-technical summary accessible to community stakeholders and non-specialists.

## 6. Supplier Requirements & Expertise

Tendering organisations must demonstrate:

- Proven expertise in marine ecology, shellfish biology, or marine habitat restoration frameworks including community engagement.
- Advanced GIS spatial modeling capabilities using national data sets
- Strong understanding of UK marine licensing, biosecurity protocols, and the Native Oyster Network guidelines.

## 7. Budget & Timeline

**Budget:** This is an invitation to quote. Please outline your proposed approach to this commission, drawing on your experience to demonstrate how you would successfully deliver these objectives along with a price for completing the project. Max 4 pages.





**Delivery window:** Beginning August 2026 to March 2027.

**Scoring Matrix** (applicants will be scored against the following):

- Methodology and approach – 20%
- Project Management and timeline – 20%
- Relevant experience – 20%
- Stakeholder and community facilitation – 20%
- Value for money -20%

**Deadline to apply:** 12am on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2026. Please submit your application to [daniel.wynn@eastdevon-nl.org.uk](mailto:daniel.wynn@eastdevon-nl.org.uk)

**Future potential:** There may be opportunities for the appointed consultant to support subsequent implementation phases, dependent upon funding and work streams.

## 8. Terms and Conditions

- East Devon National Landscape Partnership is hosted by East Devon County Council and so East Devon County Council's standard contract terms apply.
- Before the Council engages a contractor to provide services, it must ascertain whether the contractor's employment status meets the requirements of the IR35 tax rules relating to services provided through an intermediary. Should the Council determine that the contractor is to be regarded as employed for tax purposes, the Council is required to deduct income tax and national insurance contributions from payments to the contractor. (See Chapter 10, Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions Act) 2003.)
- Bidders will fully co-operate with the Council to provide all necessary information to enable the Council to accurately determine employment status. Note: The intermediary may be liable for tax and national insurance contributions if fraudulent information is provided. East Devon County Council are not bound to accept the lowest priced or any quote and shall not be bound to accept the supplier as sole supplier. Prices quoted shall remain firm for the duration of the contract. Value Added Tax (VAT) should be shown separately and the VAT registration number given.
- By providing us with a quotation you agree to be bound by East Devon County Council Terms and Conditions ([Standard Purchase Order Terms and Conditions](#)) which will apply to any contract awarded to you after you have provided us with our quotation.