



Invitation to Tender (ITT): Blue Carbon Habitats off the East Devon Coast

1. Executive Summary

Project Title: Blue Carbon Habitats off the East Devon Coast: Stage 1 Desk-Based Assessment

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

Date of Issue: 24th July 2026

Tender Submission Deadline: 12am Friday 24th 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 investigate the current distribution, condition, and realistic expansion potential of blue carbon habitats, including seagrass meadows (*Zostera marina*), saltmarshes, and kelp beds, along the East Devon coast.

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 Bay (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 out to the 12-nautical-mile territorial waters limit, prioritizing coastal zones suitable for blue carbon habitat

Focal Ecosystems

The assessment must evaluate the full suite of regional blue carbon resources:

www.eastdevon-nl.org.uk



@eastdevonnl



@eastdevonnl



- Vegetated Coastal Habitats: Saltmarsh and tidal reedbeds (primarily within the Exe, Otter, Sid and Axe estuaries).
- Marine Habitats: Zostera seagrass beds (*Zostera marina* and *Zostera noltii*) and macroalgae/kelp forests.
- Subtidal Sediments: Organic and inorganic carbon stores within soft seafloor muds and biogenic reefs.

4. Scope of Work & Deliverables

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

Phase A: Baseline Assessment (The "Current State")

- Data Synthesis: Aggregate existing spatial datasets, academic research and statutory monitoring data, e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England, Devon County Council.
- GIS Mapping: Produce high-resolution GIS layers outlining the verified distribution and estimated extent of existing blue carbon stocks.
- Carbon Stock Estimation: Quantify the baseline carbon sequestration and storage capacity of these habitats using localised or representative UK carbon values.

Phase B: Opportunity Mapping & Expansion Feasibility

- Habitat Suitability Modelling: Identify physical, bathymetric, and oceanographic conditions indicating areas prime for natural regeneration or active restoration (e.g., seagrass planting or saltmarsh managed realignment).
- Constraint Mapping: Overlap opportunities with human and environmental constraints, including:
 - Commercial and recreational fisheries (e.g., bottom-towed gear restrictions under the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw).
 - Recreational pressures (e.g., boat moorings and anchoring impacts).
 - Coastal defence infrastructure, water quality, and marine licensing constraints.



Phase C: Strategic Roadmap & Next Steps

- **Prioritisation Matrix:** Rank potential restoration sites based on ecological viability, carbon return on investment, 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.
- Advanced GIS spatial modeling capabilities using national data sets
- Strong understanding of UK marine habitats and UK natural capital guidelines

7. Budget & Timeline

Budget: This is an invitation to quote. Please briefly 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: Mid July 2026 to February 2027.

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

- Methodology and approach – 25%
- Project Management and timeline – 25%





East Devon National Landscape

- Relevant experience – 20%
- Stakeholder and community facilitation – 10%
- Value for money -20%

Deadline to apply: 12am on Friday 24th July 2026. Please submit your application to stephanie.aburrow@eastdevon-nl.org.uk

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

8. Terms & 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.

