

Green Recovery Challenge Fund



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The
National Lottery
Heritage Fund



Environment
Agency



NATURAL
ENGLAND



GROUNDWORK
CHANGING PLACES
CHANGING LIVES

Programme Evaluation

Invitation to Tender

*Natural Neighbourhoods, Green Recovery Challenge Fund
National Lottery Heritage Fund
June 2021*



Reference: NN/GRCF/JUNE21

Address: Groundwork UK, Suite B2, The Walker Building, 58 Oxford Street,
Birmingham, B5 5NR

Email: contracts@groundwork.org.uk

Website: www.groundwork.org.uk

Commissioning Body:

Groundwork UK

Company limited by guarantee and registered in England No. 1900511

Charity Registration No. 291558

Registered Office: Lockside, 5 Scotland Street, Birmingham, B1 2RR

Commissioning Officer: Sarah Duncan, Quality Manager

Table of Contents

Opportunity and Context	4
About Natural Neighbourhoods	5
Programme Detail	5
Timescales.....	6
Locations	6
Natural Neighbourhoods Programme Evaluation	7
About Groundwork	7
Our Values.....	7
Tender Details.....	8
The Successful Tenderer	8
Key Aims.....	8
Expectations	8
Key Outputs	9
Research Questions and Indicative Methods	9
Copyright and Intellectual Outputs	10
Data Protection	10
Budget	10
Responding to the Tender	10
Format of Response	10
Queries	10
Procurement Process.....	11
Appendix A: Selection Criteria.....	12
Appendix B: Theory of Change	13
Appendix D: Schedule of Costs.....	14
Appendix F: Evaluation Tender Submission Coversheet.....	15

Opportunity and Context

Groundwork UK is seeking a partner to undertake a short qualitative evaluation with a strong emphasis on face-to-face engagement with projects and participants of *Natural Neighbourhoods* (NN), delivered by Groundwork with funds from the Defra Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF) programme, via the National Lottery Heritage Fund's (NLHF)

Context

Urban green spaces are, by far, the most frequently visited natural environments, estimated to deliver £6.6bn of health, climate change and environmental benefits annually (Parks Alliance). However, investment in management has declined sharply in the last decade, impacting significantly on both their amenity value and environmental quality. The pandemic has seen visits rise significantly but 'Neighbourhood services' (including parks) are disproportionately impacted by funding cuts, particularly in more disadvantaged areas.

Covid has highlighted the inequity of provision and, despite the increase in visits, the gap in terms of access has grown. Older people and people on low incomes have found it harder to be active outdoors, and many with long-term conditions feel parks are currently unsafe to use. Parks are valued more by people from BAME backgrounds, yet more children from BAME families have spent less time outside due to Covid compared to their white peers. Many councils have recognised the need for natural solutions and have embedded green space into plans to address health inequalities and combat climate change, but they face a capacity and funding gap. Voluntary organisations who might typically support landowners have seen their income drop due to the pandemic and a recent survey of community groups showed that 64% reported a decrease in active volunteers, further reducing capacity.

60,000 people are employed in managing green spaces, but this is an ageing workforce with only 15% women and relatively few from a non-white background.

Natural Neighbourhoods is a new programme that brings the opportunity to create a lasting legacy in the way parks and green spaces are perceived and used. It will create jobs for young people and unlock voluntary action on nature recovery and climate change.

Programme Overview

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is a Government fund developed by Defra in partnership with its Arms-Length Bodies; the Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) are administering on behalf of Defra. Groundwork has been successful in securing a grant to deliver the *Natural Neighbourhoods* programme.

The *Natural Neighbourhoods* programme will focus in areas in disadvantaged communities in the Midlands and North, where they experienced the worst social and economic impacts of the pandemic – communities where Covid has exacerbated health inequalities and led to a significant rise in youth unemployment.

It will support landowners to protect and enhance parks and green spaces that matter to local communities, tackling a decline in the amount and quality of accessible green space in towns with high levels of deprivation; country parks in urban fringe areas; pockets of public space in isolated rural communities. It will connect more people with nature, promote volunteering to improve health and wellbeing.

More visitors means a wider group of people to engage in activities, increasing awareness of the value of nature and heritage and locking in positive health and environmental behaviours. The need to support people who are vulnerable, in poor health or convalescing, can help position green spaces as a crucial part of our national health infrastructure and enable green social prescribing.

The programme will increase economic opportunity, creating jobs and developing a longer-term programme of environmental traineeships. This will give a diverse range of young people the opportunity to build a career in a sector with significant issues. These new jobs will be particularly valuable in the North and Midlands, where young people are being disproportionately affected by lockdowns due to the high numbers in casual employment in the hospitality and retail sectors.

About Natural Neighbourhoods

Programme Detail

Natural Neighbourhoods will be delivered by a partnership of Groundwork Trusts. The project will:

- Deliver environmental renewal in urban parks and green spaces that serve disadvantaged communities
- Improve the employment prospects of unemployed people living in places suffering from the economic downturn, through structured volunteering placements, practical skills development, and training
- Support young people to enter roles in land management and environmental renewal through traineeship roles supported by the DWP Kickstart scheme for young people at risk of long term unemployment

Nine Groundwork Trusts will deliver the programme in 15 different teams across a number of locations and sites (70+) selected on the basis of environmental and socio-economic need.

The **environmental improvements** in parks and urban green spaces will be delivered via **‘Green Teams’** – a team-based training and development programme designed to develop practical and employability skills amongst unemployed people. All activities will focus on **increasing access to nature amongst disadvantaged groups** and in **encouraging underrepresented groups into employment in environmental/ green careers**.

Young people will be employed as trainees (via Kickstart), working alongside experienced staff, and **volunteers**, those that volunteer regularly and those that volunteer on a more infrequent basis. The programme will also work with volunteers, unemployed people of all ages (including those on UC and those who self-declare), who will participate as volunteers. They will receive **support and training**, enhancing their career prospects, particularly in the growing **green economy**. Regular volunteers should engage with the programme for a period of 12-26 weeks, and up to 26 hours a week.

The programme will also engage community members in less structured (potentially one off) volunteering events and activities.

Training and/or qualifications include:

- Health & Safety L1/L2
- In-house carbon literacy, sustainability. Green jobs training programme
- Employability skills
- Vocational qualifications: CSCS, tool use

Outputs and Outcomes

Natural Neighbourhoods will target the following outputs and outcomes:

Output	Focus
Outcome: A wider range of people involved in heritage	
Impact: Local natural heritage is better understood, valued and protected by a more diverse range of people	
100 young people at risk of unemployment employed as trainees	Kickstart trainees

360 volunteers supporting green space improvements	Regular volunteers
2,300 community members from diverse backgrounds engaged in nature connection activities	Informal volunteers
Outcome: Heritage will be in a better condition	
Impact: Local natural heritage is better understood, valued and protected by a more diverse range of people	
Land improved on 70+ sites in 24 locations spanning 843 hectares	Project sites
14,000 trees and shrubs planted	Project sites
1,500m2 wildflowers for pollinators planted	Project sites
16km of footpaths created/restored	Project sites
Outcome: People will have developed skills	
Impact: The environmental sector has the skills and capacity to tackle the climate and nature emergency; communities are equipped to work more effectively with land managers	
100 young people trained in horticulture and land management skills	Kickstart trainees
22.5 supervisors trained to deliver carbon literacy skills	Delivery staff
360 volunteers supported to deliver environmental improvement tasks	Regular volunteers
50% of trainees progress into further training or work	Kickstart trainees
Outcome: People will have learnt about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions	
Impact: Communities have a deeper understanding and appreciation of nature on their doorstep and are practically involved in helping to protect it	
360 community members regularly volunteering at their local green space	Regular volunteers
80% of trainees report improved understanding of the natural environment and links to climate change	Kickstart trainees
Outcome: People will have greater wellbeing	
Impact: People living in areas with entrenched health inequalities have improved their physical and mental health by regularly engaging with nature	
80% of trainees report improved wellbeing	Kickstart trainees
80% of regular volunteers report improved wellbeing	Regular volunteers
60% of community members report increased number of positive social interactions	Informal volunteers
Outcome: The funded organisation will be more resilient	
Impact: Groundwork has improved resources and relationships and is able to contribute more effectively to the long-term	
18.4 jobs retained, increasing capacity to continue managing and maintaining green spaces	Trusts
Strengthened relationships with landowners lead to further commissions and funding	Trusts
14 new jobs, contributing towards 22.5 FTE Supervisor roles	Trusts

Timescales

Natural Neighbourhoods delivery will commence in January 2021, with the programme activity concluding on 31 March 2022. It is expected that the evaluation will commence during the summer of 2021 and conclude in March 2022.

Locations

The programme will focus on 70+ sites across the Midlands and the north of England. A full list of delivery locations will be provided to the successful organisation(s).

Natural Neighbourhoods Programme Evaluation

In order to draw out lessons about the impact of funding as a whole, NLHF has partnered with external evaluators ICF to undertake a programme-level study of *Natural Neighbourhoods*. This will also enable NLHF and Defra to collate and assess evidence of the impact, value for money and delivery process of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund overall.

While the this tender should be seen as an independent stream of work, we anticipate that the programme-level study and this tender will complement and feed into each other. The bidder should be aware that each project may be expected to contribute to the programme-level impact study by collecting a set of common quantitative measures, such as monitoring data and outcomes for young people and heritage locations. This data will be collected using a set of standardised data collection tools developed by Groundwork UK.

The programme-level Theory of Change is attached as **Appendix C**.

About Groundwork

The Groundwork Federation is a group of independent charities helping people and organisations make changes in order to create better neighbourhoods, to build skills and job prospects and to live in a greener way. Our work is very diverse, encompassing improving local green spaces, community development, greener living and working and improving prospects and tackling unemployment, particularly amongst young people not in education, training or employment.

There are currently 15 individual charities at a local level. As the central point of the Federation, Groundwork UK builds partnerships, generates funding and manages programmes on a national basis. Collectively we are one of the largest environmental charities in the UK. We make a significant impact, delivering over 6,000 local environmental, community and regeneration projects each year.

Our Values

Groundwork UK is environmentally aware and focused on communities in need. We aim to be collaborative, show integrity and strive for quality in everything we do.

Tender Details

The Successful Tenderer

The successful tenderer is likely to have experience in more than one of the following areas:

- 'in the field' assessment of youth, community and employment interventions; heritage and environmental improvement projects.
- working with third sector organisations and understanding the specific challenges faced by this sector
- working with a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities and statutory services
- an understanding of and sympathy with Groundwork's mission and objectives
- embedding evaluations within relevant policy context
- researching and understanding relevant commissioning landscapes
- writing clear and impactful reports and case studies for a variety of audiences
- working flexibly and in close partnership with a commissioning organisation

Experience in evaluating young person-focused interventions concentrating on one or more of the following areas would be advantageous:

- youth and communities
- parks and green space
- employment and the Green Economy
- heritage

Joint or consortium bids with academic bodies or other third party evaluators are acceptable (but not necessarily preferred) and encouraged from agencies with complementary capabilities, with the proviso that they must show they meet the criteria and all agencies must not be subject to any exclusions or disqualifications stated below. Joint bids must designate a lead bidder and contact to act as the key contractor for Groundwork UK's purposes.

In order to ensure that this research is impartial and relevant, Groundwork UK will not award the contract to any party who has:

- canvassed any Groundwork UK or Groundwork Trust personnel or Board Members
- a personal relationship of any kind to any person employed by or on the Local and Federation Boards of Groundwork
- previously undertaken work for Groundwork UK which has not been completed to our satisfaction

Contracts awarded where the above criteria is later declared will be declared null and void, and any payments made must be repaid to Groundwork UK as per the contract conditions.

Key Aims

Groundwork UK's key aim for the evaluation is to evidence the impact of the programme on young people (trainees), volunteers, community members. We are also interested in proposals which evidence the impact of the programme on heritage sites and their users, and the resilience of the organisations involved. Proposals may also wish to test and provide suggestions for improvement to the programme Theory of Change.

Expectations

It is expected that the successful tenderer will:

- Work flexibly and collaboratively with the Groundwork UK and Groundwork Trusts leading delivery from hub locations
- Engage positively and collaboratively with programme participants and volunteers, and where appropriate with the funders and their evaluation partner.
- Attend key meetings and events throughout the programme to form relationships with partners and disseminate learning

- Attend regular review meetings (in person and by telephone) with Groundwork UK and partners

Key Outputs

- Verbal update reports – frequency to be agreed
- A concise Interim Report midway through delivery
- Between 10 and 15 qualitative case studies suitable for external use, including quotes and photographs, demonstrating the impact of the programme. To be agreed, but to potentially comprise of:
 - trainee case studies
 - heritage site case studies
 - training programme case study
- Suggestions on revisions to the Theory of Change (where the proposal includes a review of the Theory of Change).
- A full Final Evaluation Report covering all key areas
- A concise Summary Report extracted from the Final Report, suitable for wider dissemination.

Research Questions and Indicative Methods

The following framework is intended to act as a guide for prospective evaluators. Providers are invited to design alternative or additional research questions and methods if they add value to or deepen our understanding of what works and why. We will consider proposals which focus on a smaller number of questions relating to young people / trainees in greater depth.

It is essential that the evaluation team has experience in using interactive research tools and methods to successfully engage young people.

We anticipate that the majority of data collected will be **qualitative**, with the evaluation team spending time working **face-to-face** with project beneficiaries and other key stakeholders. Quantitative data analysis will be undertaken by the Groundwork UK team, and will be made available to the successful evaluators.

Proposed Research Questions – to be understood through beneficiary and stakeholder engagement

- Has the *Natural Neighbourhoods* Theory of Change worked as intended, and to what extent did the programme achieve its aims?
- How effective is the delivery model at achieving outcomes for young people (trainees)? Were there any unexpected outcomes?
- What impact has the programme had on key stakeholders, such as green space users?
- What changes could be made to achieve the best outcomes for beneficiaries and stakeholders?
- How effective is the delivery model at achieving outcomes for organisations?

Indicative Methods

We anticipate that the evaluator will focus primarily on **in-depth qualitative methods**.

Quantitative data collated and analysed by Groundwork UK will be made available on request. You are encouraged to state which methods and approach will be most effective to achieve the research questions.

We anticipate the use of mixture of qualitative methods, such as:

- In-depth one-to-one interviews
- Group workshops, interactive sessions

- Observations of interventions
- Detailed case studies (as set out above)
- Longitudinal case studies of young people throughout and after programme involvement

Copyright and Intellectual Outputs

Copyright in the final report will be vested in Groundwork UK and a declaration to this effect will be required on award of contract. A confidentiality agreement will also be required on award of contract, which will specify that:

- Authors will be deemed to have asserted Moral Right pursuant to the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.
- Authors may use, on final sign-off of the report, Groundwork UK as a reference for further work.
- Authors will be expected to obtain and provide copies of licenses, copyright releases or other permissions needed for any images used within the report.

Data Protection

The successful organisation will be required to adhere to agreed Data Protection and Data Security requirements on the handling, storage and processing of sensitive data.

Budget

A maximum budget of **£21,000 (to include VAT)** is available to successful tenderers. Please give a *detailed* breakdown of how you intend to allocate the budget across the lifetime of the programme within your response.

Responding to the Tender

Format of Response

Please provide a response to this tender specification in no more than 3,000 words in Word or PDF format. If submitting in PDF format, the text of the document must be able to be highlighted / selected to allow for a word count check. Tenders must be submitted electronically.

Please ensure you include:

- Details of your organisation.
- Your understanding of the brief (including Groundwork, the partnership and the programme objectives).
- Details of your staff team who will be working directly on this evaluation.
- A detailed methodology clearly linked to relevant research questions.
- Any additional or alternative research questions or approaches you feel appropriate.
- Evidence of recent (within the last two years) and relevant experience conducting similar evaluations.
- A detailed budget - see appendix.
- Details of 2 recent referees who are willing to be contacted regarding work you have completed on their behalf.

If you wish, you may also attach examples of relevant CVs, reports or case studies to support your tender, which do not count towards the overall word count.

Queries

Any queries regarding this tender should be directed to Sarah Duncan at sarah.duncan@groundwork.org.uk stating "Natural Neighbourhoods Tender Query" in the subject line by no later than midday, 8th July 2021.

Procurement Process

1. Please send tender submissions to karen.field@groundwork.org.uk by 12:00pm (noon), 12th July 2021.
2. Groundwork will assess tenders and respond to all tenderers by 19th July 2021.
3. The completed tenders will be assessed, and the highest scoring tenderers will be invited to interview on either 23rd or 26th July 2021. Interviews will take place via video call through MS Teams or Zoom.
4. The outcome of the interviews will be communicated by 30th July 2021.
5. The successful tenderer(s) to meet with Groundwork UK during week commencing 2nd August 2021.
6. Delivery to commence 9th August 2021.

Appendix A: Selection Criteria

Please note that organisations failing the one or both of the *selection* criteria listed below will **not** be assessed for or invited to interview.

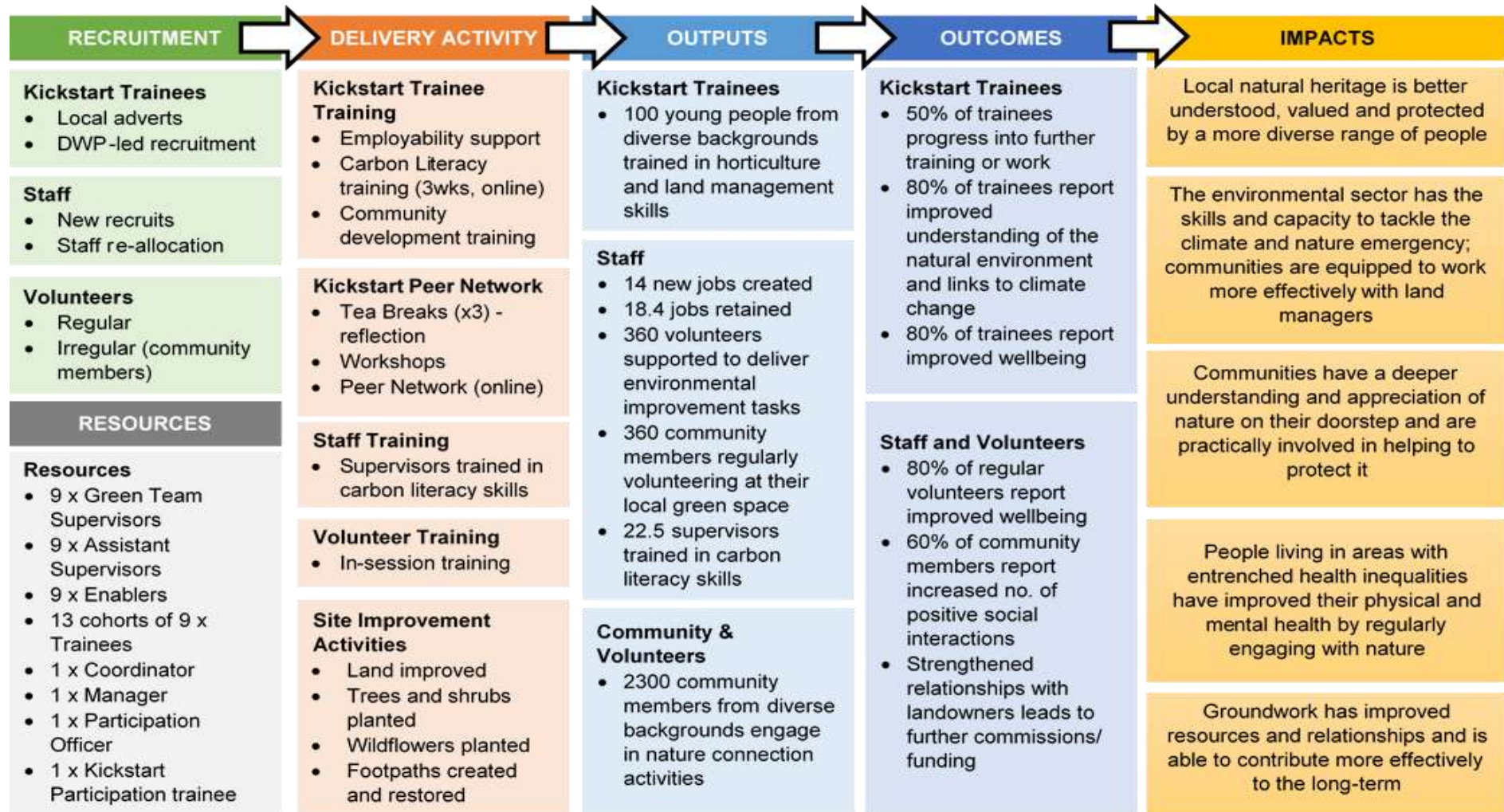
	Criteria Type	Scoring Guide	Max. Score
Word Count	Selection	Pass – within word count maximum Fail – over 5000 words	Pass / Fail
Context and Understanding	Assessment	0 – no understanding of the context nor the requirements of the tender demonstrated 1 – limited demonstration of the tender requirements and/or its context 2 – reasonable demonstration of the tender requirements and its context. Includes reference to how the organisation meets the characteristics and expectations set out in the tender and some understanding of the heritage and social context of the programme 3 – good demonstration of the tender requirements, the programme structure and its context. Includes detailed reference to how the organisation meets the characteristics and expectations set out in the tender and a clear understanding of the heritage and social context of the programme 4 - excellent demonstration of the tender requirements, the programme structure and its context. Includes very detailed reference to how the organisation meets the characteristics and expectations set out in the tender, and a strong demonstration of an understanding of the heritage and social context of the programme	4
Methodology	Assessment	0 – no methodology given 1 – limited methodology: no or limited timescales; little indication of methods to be used; very limited linking of methodology to research questions 2 – adequate methodology: some timescales given; indication of broad methods to be used; some linking of methodology to relevant research questions 3 – good methodology: clear timescales given; clear methods set out along with strong links to relevant research questions 4 – excellent methodology: clear and practical timescales given; methods set out in detail with definite links to relevant research questions and named staff members 5 - excellent methodology: clear and practical timescales given; methods set out in detail with definite links to relevant research questions and named staff members; organisation proposes innovative and/or tailored methodology to ensure vulnerable young people are able to participate	5
Experience	Assessment	0 – no relevant experience and/or examples given 1 – limited experience and/or examples given 2 – moderate experience and/or examples given 3 – detailed experience and/or examples given	3
Resources	Assessment	0 – no detail of resource allocation given 1 – limited detail of resource allocation given 2 – adequate detail of resource allocation given, including named staff 3 – good or excellent detail of resource allocation given, including named staff, experience, their role within the proposal and copies of CVs where relevant	3
Budget – amount	Selection	Pass – tender is within budget, including VAT Fail – tender is over budget/does not include VAT	Pass / Fail
Budget – detail	Assessment	0 – no budget detail given 1 – budget detail limited to headline costs 2 – fair level of budget detail given, including individual resource costs 3 – detailed breakdown of expected budget expenditure with clear reference to programme outputs	3
TOTAL			18

Appendix B: Theory of Change

Natural Neighbourhoods Theory of Change

Aims

- Kickstart trainees and volunteers are equipped to develop their careers in the land management sector
- Individuals benefit from enhanced employment prospects whilst helping the sector benefit from a younger and more diverse workforce.



Appendix D: Schedule of Costs

This may be recreated within the body of the tender document if wished.

Cost Centre	Day Rate (if applicable)	Number of Days	Cost of This Element	Total Cost
Researcher(s) State name of each researcher and day rate for each here (<i>add new row as required</i>)				
Travel and Subsistence Costs				
Other Costs (Specify)				
VAT				
Totals				

Appendix F: Evaluation Tender Submission Coversheet

TENDER DETAILS			
Tender reference			
YOUR ORGANISATION DETAILS			
Organisation Name			
Registered Address			
Contact staff member		Job title	
Email address		Tel. no.	
Registered Company / Charity number			
Business Reference 1			
Name			
Address			
Contact details			
Business Reference 2			
Name			
Address			
Contact details			
Tender Checklist Your tender should include:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Names & job roles of your evaluation team relevant to this tender <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant experience relating to your evaluation team members <input type="checkbox"/> An outline Research Plan including methodology and timescales which directly refers to the Aims, Outcomes and Scope set out in the Briefing Document <input type="checkbox"/> A schedule of costs in the format set out in Appendix A			
SIGNATURE			
<p>I/We hereby submit a bona fide tender for this work, and agree to abide by and be bound by the conditions of the brief and instructions to tenderers, and understand that this my/our tender, its contents and the brief/instructions shall form part of any contract awarded. I/we agree to prerogate the laws of England as applying to the processes of tender, award, management and discharge of contract.</p>			
Name & Position:			
Signature:			Date: