



Invitation to tender for REAL's Research Hub Project:

End of waste case information for digestate derived products

Tender Invitation Document

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Renewable Energy Assurance Limited (REAL) invites contractors to tender for the work outlined below. Following a competitive tender process, REAL will appoint the successful contractor to deliver the project.

Purpose of the tender

The purpose of the tender opportunity is to appoint a contractor to develop and deliver REAL's Research Hub project titled '*End of waste case information for digestate derived products.*'

Tender timeframe

Deadline for receipt of tender submissions: **21st February 2025**

Deadline for questions in relation to this tender: **24th January 2025**

Tenderers receive written notification of REAL's decision: **4th March 2025**

Work programme

Contract start date: **17th March 2025**

Contract duration: **12 months**

**REAL reserve the right to change this timetable*

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Section introduces Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd. and explains its work in administering the Organics Schemes and the Research Hub.

Renewable Energy Assurance Ltd (REAL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology (The REA). REAL carries out a range of certification and consumer protection activities, all of which promote sustainable energy and circular resource use (organics recycling). REAL's activities fall under two headings; certification schemes and consumer codes.

Among other codes and schemes, REAL owns and administers the following quality certification schemes related to the organics recycling sector: the Compost Certification Scheme (CCS), the Biofertiliser Certification Scheme (BCS) and the Compostable Materials Certification Scheme (CMCS). The CCS and BCS enforce high quality standards for compost and biofertiliser (i.e., quality-certified anaerobic digestate), respectively. Together, these schemes provide assurance to consumers, farmers, food producers and retailers that quality-certified compost and digestate is safe for human, animal, and plant health.

In 2019, through collaboration with the CCS/BCS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), REAL established the Research Hub. The Research Hub functions as a tool to source research funding from the composting and anaerobic digestion industries. With these funds, the Research Hub commissions projects aimed at developing the technical and regulatory aspects of certified compost and digestate production, improving testing and usage of certified compost and digestate, and reinforcing certified compost and digestate markets.

REAL wishes to appoint a contractor to develop and deliver project commissioned by the Research Hub titled '*End of waste case information for digestate derived products.*'

The appointed contractor will be required to work with the REAL-appointed Steering Group, the Research Hub's Research Panel and REAL staff.

This document sets out the scope and parameters of the work which REAL wishes to commission and describes how contractors may tender to undertake this work for REAL.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

This Section explains project's relevance to REAL's work and the wider organics recycling industry and outlines the project's intended contributions.

2.1 Project Background

End of waste positions (Quality Protocols / Resource Frameworks) are essential for industry and the Compost and Biofertiliser Certification Schemes (CCS and BCS). Industry is keen for the revised Anaerobic Digestate Quality Protocol (ADQP) - soon to be replaced by the Anaerobic Digestate Resource Framework (ADRF) - to include digestate derived products beyond the currently allowed 'fertiliser' and 'soil improver' product types. Examples of desirable additional product types are named in the project objectives section below. Enabling and explicitly stating allowed options for further processing of digestate would also help compliance with other regulations and benefit industry, regulators, and the environment. Having an industry wide agreed position (i.e. the ADRF) with a wider scope for end-products and their designated market will enable further development of the sector and incentivise operators to produce certified AD process outputs, rather than apply for individual bespoke End of Waste (EOW) agreements with the regulators.

Building on the previous Research Hub project that investigated digestate processing and digestate valorisation ([more info here](#)), this project will look at product types in use in other countries and identify the technologies used for producing each of them. It will also look at near-market and marketed further processed digestates produced in the UK using the same technologies or producible using technologies that are at high Technical Readiness Levels for commercial deployment. The project will compile information that could be used as part of an end of waste case submission and to inform the revision of the ADRF.

2.2 Project Scope

This project aims to enable the inclusion of a broader range of end-products and their designated market scope in the Environment Agency's AD Resources Framework.

To fulfil this aim, the project's key objective is to research and compile information on a range of digestate derived products in terms of how they can be used, the demand for them and how each of them compares to a suitable non-waste comparator. For example (but not restricted to)

- fertiliser pellets,
- dried fibre digestates,
- nutrient-enhanced fibre digestates,
- nutrient-reduced fibre digestates,
- fibre digestate used in growing media (e.g. after aerobic maturation),
- fibre digestate used as a soil improver in soft landscape applications,
- further processed liquid digestate,
- AD-process-derived ammonium nitrate fertilisers,
- products derived from Reverse Osmosis.

SERVICES REQUIRED

This Section describes the work required of the contractor to deliver the project.

- 2.3** The appointed contractor will develop and deliver the Research Hub Project titled ‘*End of waste case information for digestate derived products.*’

The appointed contractor will be responsible for fulfilling the project objective outlined in Section 2.2 of this Tender Invitation Document. In addition to these objectives, the project should include the following key elements:

2.3.1 Key Elements

- a) Compilation of evidence that could inform end of waste case submissions, towards the revision (i.e., expansion of scope) of the ADRF, building on:
- The information presented in the Research Hub ‘[digestate valorisation report](#)’ (*Alternative digestate uses and valorisation in a UK context, 2021*);
 - The WRAP report, [Identifying impacts from food and farm digestates](#), March 2023;
 - The digestate derived products that are in use or at a high commercial / Technological Readiness Level rating (in other countries and/or the UK); and
 - Any AD-relevant product types that are in the EU Fertilising Products Regulation and its AD-relevant Delegated Act(s) that are not within the scope of the current ADQP.

Information needed includes:

- Types of feedstock used for the treatment process.
 - How the fully-treated material will be used (i.e. what product type and in what markets).
 - The market or demand that exists for the fully-treated material, including the market uses of relevant product types in other countries where the technology has been deployed.
 - How the fully-treated material fulfils the technical requirements for its specific purposes and meets the existing legislation and standards applicable to products (PAS110 Standard [here](#))
 - How the fully-treated material fulfils the technical requirements for its specific purposes and meets the existing legislation and standards applicable to products.
 - Assurance that the use of the fully-treated material will not lead to overall adverse environmental or human health impacts (e.g. through a rapid risk assessment).
 - Identification of at least one relevant non-waste comparator for each digestate-derived product (the number of comparators for each product to be agreed with the regulators).
- b) Production of a report that will enable digestate-derived products to be considered during revision of the ADRF or during revision of SEPA’s End of Waste position, and that provides information useful to operators when applying to their regulator as to whether their fully treated waste-derived product has met End of Waste criteria.

2.3.2 Project Deliverables

- Regular meetings with the Steering Group to provide project updates and agree project milestones.
- Fulfilment of the key objectives of the project, taking into account the key elements outlined in Section 3.1 of this document.
- A final meeting with REAL to discuss the project in its entirety, during which the appointed contractor shall present the findings enclosed in the final report.
- A final report '*End of waste case information for digestate derived products.*'

2.4 Competence requirements

REAL will appoint a contractor (an individual, organisation or consortium) with:

- Expert knowledge of the Anaerobic Digestion Quality Protocol.
- A broad understanding of the potential end uses for the fully-treated materials (beyond the currently allowed 'fertiliser' and 'soil improver' product types) and the market demand for them.
- The ability to assess whether the fully-treated materials fulfil the technical requirements for the specific purposes and meet the existing legislation and standards applicable to products.
- Expertise in carrying out risk assessments for digestate derived products.
- Experience of producing reports to inform standards or quality protocols.

3 TENDER REQUIREMENTS

This Section provides instructions for preparing tenders.

3.1 Your tender should be submitted by email and should be limited to no more than 10 x A4 sides at minimum 10pt font (excluding appendices).

3.2 Your tender must include the following information in the order indicated:

I. An executive summary

This should be no longer than one side of A4 paper, outlining the proposed work and including the total cost of the proposed work, inclusive of Value Added Tax (“VAT”) and anticipated expenses.

II. Company/Organisation details

Please include the following information:

- The name of the Company submitting the tender;
- The registered office name, address, VAT number (if applicable) and company or charity registration number;
- The name of the nominated contact person within the tenderer’s organisation;
- Contact details including address, telephone number and e-mail address

REAL will accept tenders from both individual companies and from consortia. Should you decide to tender as part of a consortium, you will need to identify one member of the consortium (the “Lead Contractor”) to act as the contracting party. All other consortium members will be sub-contractors to the Lead Contractor.

III. A description of your working methods

You will need to make clear how you intend to deliver the work and provide estimated timescales for delivery.

IV. A description of the project team who will manage and deliver the work

This should include a list of individuals, their respective roles within the organisation and, for the purposes of this work, their relevant skills and experience including any relevant professional qualifications.

V. An identification of any sub-contractors to be used

You should include a list of any sub-contractors you intend to use to deliver the work.

VI. Evidence of a track record in undertaking work similar to that described in this document

VII. Breakdown costs (exclusive of VAT) including

- Individual day rates and number of days of each staff member involved in delivering work
- Expenses

VIII. Identification of any conflicts of interest

Please disclose any conflicts of interest which might arise if you were selected to undertake the work. Please also include a contingency plan for addressing any identified conflict(s) of interest, should conflict(s) arise. Where you tender as part of a consortium, all members of the consortium should be considered.

IX. A copy of your Environmental Policy and evidence of any accredited Environmental Management System.

X. Written confirmation that you have the necessary permits, licences or exemptions required for the services.

XI. Appendices

Tenderers should include the following documents as appendices:

- Audited or management accounts for the last 2 financial years;
REAL reserves the right to reject bids from Contractors where the accounts show that the Contractor might be at risk of insolvency.
- A statement of any material litigation, pending or threatened, or other legal proceedings;
REAL reserves the right to reject bids from Contractors subject to legal proceedings where in REAL's reasonable opinion such proceedings could impact upon the Contractor's ability to deliver the services required.
- Evidence of the level of professional indemnity, public liability and property damage insurance cover held.
REAL will require minimum cover levels of:
 - £1 million professional indemnity;
 - £2 million public liability;
 - £2 million property damage.To be considered for evaluation, Contractors must have this cover in place at the time of bidding or must include (as part of the tender submission) a commitment to take out such cover in the event of being appointed.

3.3 Should you have any questions in relation to the type of information required by REAL, please contact the person identified in Section 6 of this Tender Invitation Document to discuss.

3.4 All tender submissions will be treated on a confidential basis by REAL and its advisers, subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

This Section specifies the criteria REAL will use to evaluate the tender submissions and appoint a contractor.

- 4.1** REAL must be satisfied that each potential contractor has the appropriate capabilities and resources available to undertake the work to REAL’s requirements and provide the necessary services.
- 4.2** REAL will select its Research Hub contractors through a competitive process. Your tender submission should be written to address the key requirements and scope of the work and demonstrate how it meets the evaluation criteria below:

Evaluation criteria	Weighting
Cost of work	20%
Methodology proposed to deliver required services	40%
Authority of allocated personnel, their skills and technical capability	20%
Corporate environmental commitment – submission of credible environmental policy and/or environmental management system details	5%
Relevant experience	15%

5 SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

This Section provides instructions for submitting tenders.

Please send one electronic copy (via email) of your tender submission to Jackie Robinson, Research Hub Project Manager at Renewable Energy Assurance Limited at jackie@recc.org.uk

Emails containing Tender submissions should clearly state the following in the subject field: 'End of waste case information for digestate derived products – Tender Submission Document'

The deadline to submit a tender for this project is: **21st February 2025**

If you wish to ask any questions relating to this tender, please contact the Research Hub Project Manager in writing only.*

**NOTE: All questions submitted to REAL about this Tender Invitation Document will be anonymised and uploaded to the Research Hub website as a Q&A at least one week prior to the deadline for tender submissions.*

6 TENDER PROCESS & TIMETABLE

This Section explains the tender process and outlines the expected timeline.

- 6.1** All tender submissions must remain valid for a minimum period of 90 days following the deadline for receipt of tender submissions.
- 6.2** All tender submissions will be competitively assessed against the evaluation criteria, outlined in Section 5 of this document.
- 6.3** The target timetable for this process is as follows:
- Deadline for tender submissions: **21st February 2025**
 - Deadline for questions in relation to this tender: **24th January 2025**
 - Tenderers receive written notification of REAL's decision: **4th March 2025**
- 6.4** All tenderers will receive written notification of REAL's decision and will have the opportunity to discuss feedback on their tender submission.
- 6.5** This information is offered in good faith for the guidance of interested parties, but no warranty or representation is given as to the accuracy or completeness of any of it. REAL and its advisers shall not be liable for any error, misstatement, or omission. No aspect of this procedure shall constitute a contract or part of a contract. Tenderers participate in the process on the strict understanding that the procedure may be altered or that REAL may not proceed for any reason. REAL reserves the right not to follow up this Tender Invitation Document in any way and in particular not to enter into any contractual arrangement with any of the tenderers. REAL does not bind itself to enter into negotiations or proceed with or accept any tender. Any decision to tender is at the sole discretion of the tenderer and REAL excludes all liability in respect of any tendering costs incurred.
- 6.6** Any contract entered into as a result of this tender process shall be in accordance with REAL's terms and conditions of contract.
- 6.7** Tenderers taking part in this process acknowledge and accept that REAL may publish details about the winning bid (such as the contract value and the name of the winning bidder) on appropriate webpages under its control.