
Procurement Form – Evaluation Committee SPONGE


1. Contract Announcement

Client:

WWF NL
Procurement & Contract Management Department
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Introduction

Governments, landscape parks, and nature organizations from Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands are collaborating to make the landscape in the Meuse-Rhine cross-border region more resilient to climate change. The new **SPONGE** project addresses drought and flooding in the area around Hasselt, Aachen, Liège, and Maastricht using **nature-based solutions**. The project is supported by the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** through the **Interreg Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)** program and has a budget of **€6.5 million**. Preparations for the official launch in October are already underway.

The project partners include WWF-NL, Drielandenpark, Landschapspark Grenzeloos Bocageland, the municipalities of Plombières, Dalhem, Raeren, Welkenraedt, Valkenburg, and the Province of Limburg (NL). Together, they have the expertise, network, and commitment to make an impact. With ERDF support via Interreg Meuse-Rhine, they are implementing a range of measures to make the landscape more resilient to extreme weather while enhancing its appeal for people and nature.

2. Description of the Assignment

The assignment involves providing **advisory services** for the SPONGE project. The goal is to sign contracts with **at least five contractors** for a **three-year** period.

SPONGE (*Upstream downstream solidarity and partnership for Nature Based adaptation and governance in cross-border river basins*) is an Interreg Meuse-Rhine program with **9 cross-border partners** advocating for the use of **Nature-Based Solutions (NBS)** and **Natural Disaster Technical Solutions (NDTS)** for water safety.

The program consists of four work packages:

WP1: 3 cross-border Living Labs

WP2: Implementation of NDTS in 4 municipalities

WP3: Implementation of NBS through a voucher system

WP4: SPONGELand strategy

Projects in **WP2** will be carried out by partner municipalities. Project proposals for **WP3** will be initiated by municipalities, SMEs, farmers, associations, or foundations. To ensure the quality of NBS, we are establishing an **evaluation committee** to assess the designs.

The evaluation will be based on specific **NBS and NDTS criteria**, available as a separate downloadable document. We expect:

WP2: 6 NDTS pilot project designs and 4 landscape measures

WP3: Approximately 30 NBS projects (60–90 actions)

The committee's recommendations for WP2 are **non-binding but guiding**. In contrast, evaluations for WP3 are **a requirement for funding approval**.

We seek **diverse areas of expertise** within the evaluation committee, such as:

- Nature-Based Solutions (NBS)
- Hydrology
- Ecology
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Sustainable society

Time commitment:

36 hours per year (total of 108 hours over 3 years), for monthly (online) meetings. Each meeting is approx. 2 hours including preparation. Most hours are expected in the **first year**, as project initiators have three years to deliver their funded projects. Evaluation frequency will decrease in years 2 and 3.

Beyond project assessments, committee members are considered **part of the SPONGE team**, and we expect to use their expertise within contracted hours for **advisory tasks outside WP2 and WP3** in support of program management.

3. Award Criteria

The contract will be awarded based on an overall assessment with the following criteria:

Criterion	Weight
Quality of service delivery	50%
Price	20%
Sustainability	20%
Customer focus and communication	10%

4. Deadlines

Activity	Date
Publication of the tender	22 August 2025
Deadline for submission	12 September 2025, 12:00 PM
Clarification note (Q&A)	22 August 2025
Evaluation of submissions completed	29 August 2025
Intention to award	5 September 2025
End of standstill period	13 September 2025
Contract start date	1 October 2025

5. Submission Procedure

We kindly request submissions in the form of a **motivation letter** and a **quotation**, received **before the submission deadline**. Only complete and timely submissions will be considered.

Required attachments:

- Motivation letter, including a description of relevant expertise for assessing NBS
- Price sheet / quotation
- Chamber of Commerce extract

We look forward to receiving your proposal by 12 September.

Final Provisions

- The client reserves the right to **terminate or amend** the tender process at any time.
- **No rights may be derived** from this procurement process.

More Information

For more information, please contact program manager Marjon Heutmekers:

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