

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR SECRETARIAT AND TECHNICAL COORDINATOR FUNCTIONS FOR YHRAF



1. Introduction

1.1 The Rural Affairs Forum for Yorkshire and The Humber (YHRAF) invites expressions of interest from agencies and organisations in the region in contracting to deliver Secretariat and technical support services as detailed below. The contract will be initially for a two year period. Those interested should advise the Secretariat of this and their relevant qualifications and experience to undertake these services by 12.00 Monday 30th July 2007. An appropriate tendering process will then follow.

2. Background

2.1 The YHRAF is a group made up of the region's rural stakeholders who aim to represent the views and concerns of the rural 'customer', i.e. people affected by policies and services in rural areas. The Forum provides feedback to authorities and organisations responsible for policy and service delivery and acts as a sounding board for new ideas. The YHRAF is now established in the Yorkshire and The Humber Region as part of the governance structures designed in tandem with the Rural Framework to implement Defra's Rural Strategy 2004 and the modernising rural delivery agenda.

2.2 YHRAF is now entering a new phase a new Chair and Steering Group and looking to develop its independent role and increasing level of activity. This will require additional support as set out in Annex 1 to complement that which the Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber can continue to provide.

3. Factors to be taken into account

3.1 Staff time input – both functions in Annex 1 are envisaged as each equating to 2 days a week at least. More time may be needed and so some flexibility will be sought to allow for input to be increased on a call-off basis on an agreed hourly rate as the Chair and Steering Group feel necessary. Both functions can be carried out by one person if desired

3.2 Contract period – the initial contract will be for a fixed term of two years, subject to satisfactory progress and with appropriate clauses for review and renewal.

3.3 Location – May well be in a rural location but access to GOYH at Leeds needs to be sustainable.

3.4 Management – it is envisaged that the officer(s) carrying out the functions will work to a programme agreed with the Steering Group and communicate as necessary with the Chair on day to day matters. Whoever delivers the technical functions should also be responsible for coordinating the administrative functions if not carried out by the same person.

3.5 Commencement – the aim is to arrange contracts to start from September 2007.

4. Next Steps

4.1 Expressions of interest in tendering for these support functions should be addressed to the Secretariat (see 1.1 above) as should any queries regarding the above – yhraf@goyh.gsi.gov.uk,

Annex 1 YHRAF – Outline Specification for Support Services to be delivered by Contract

1. YHRAF Coordinatory and Technical functions In agreement with the Chairman

- a. Coordinate engagement of rural stakeholders both from the RAF and elsewhere as appropriate, including developing and servicing Task Groups and Forum Sub-Groups, as agreed with the Chair and steering group.
- b. Make recommendations to the Chair and steering group and implement agreed actions to take forward the aims and objectives of the YHRAF, acting as a catalyst as necessary.
- c. Prepare as necessary papers for information or policy issues to the RAF Steering Group and RAF and to other regional governance structures (Rural Board, Regional Practitioners' Group, Y&H Assembly) ensuring a consistent and high quality style.
- d. Develop and manage projects and events to take forward the aims of the Forum and its Sub-groups in liaison with key partners.
- e. Represent if requested YHRAF at relevant meetings and committees at regional and national level as appropriate.
- f. Review and implement a Communications Strategy for the RAF, covering both internal communications and promoting the work of YHRAF and the regional rural agenda to a wide range of stakeholders
- g. Supervise and coordinate administrative functions and appropriate quality control as listed above.
- h. Liaise with GOYH who will be undertaking the following tasks pending review :
 - (i) assisting coordinator in setting agendas for meetings of the RAF (three times a year),
 - (ii) support to Chair and Coordinator (briefing as necessary for meetings, from Defra perspective etc)
 - (iii) editing, producing and circulating the Y&H RAF newsletter, "Rural Matters" (currently bi-monthly)
 - (iv) developing the YHRAF website and its key links, eg to Rural Observatory, as an up to date source of information and information exchange for RAF members and others.
 - (v). monitoring agreed YHRAF procedures (overseeing role re terms of reference, expenditure, elections and contract arrangements via accountable body for outsourced functions etc.)
 - (vi) reporting to and acting as link with Defra, e.g. on budgetary information and quarterly pre-ministerial meeting updates.
- i. Any other activities as directed by the Chair and Steering Group

Note: Whoever carries out this role should possess the following skills and qualities:

- Understanding of role, function and operation of regional and local government.

- Knowledge and understanding of economic, social and environmental issues affecting rural areas
- Excellent demonstrable communication, networking and reporting skills.
- Able to take the initiative and to get things done.
- Willingness and ability to be a challenger and maintain an independent position whilst still working effectively as a team player.
- Fully computer literate, and experience of using Windows based It systems.
- Able to work flexibly around the needs of the post and forum partners.
- Access and use of own reliable transport.
- Drive, enthusiasm and the ability to be self motivated.

2. Administrative Functions

- a. Support the RAF Chair by acting as first point of contact on administrative and communication matters.
- b. Circulate material, predominantly by e-mail, to RAF Steering Group and RAF as required, eg information from Chair and Steering Group members [mainly weekly]
- c. Consult, set agendas and minute the following meetings: RAF Steering Group (say six times a year), full RAF meeting (say three times year) and task and finish or ad hoc consultation meetings or events as required. Circulate minutes to appropriate membership following Chair's endorsement within agreed timescale.
- d. Organise venues, catering, equipment, transport, and all practical matters for meetings of the RAF in consultation with GOYH, RAF Steering Group, and ad hoc meetings
- e. Procure and purchase services at the direction of the RAF Chair in accordance with agreed financial procedures
- f. Maintain accounts for all income and expenditure by the RAF and provide reports as necessary.
- g. Routine website updates (adding links, minutes of meetings etc) through liaison with the web administrator, Fenweb.

Note. The necessary competences and qualities required in delivering these functions should be self-evident but reliability, a well-organised approach and good computer literacy are important.