

By email 24/01/2022

Hi [Redacted]

Thanks for the chat earlier. If you are able to share the details that you have on the UCL work for DEFRA, aims/objectives, timings, people involved, any known evidence, that would be very helpful for us to decide how to proceed.

Thanks
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot
Sent: 20 January 2022 14:24
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot
cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot
Subject: FW: CRF Call for Applications 2022/23 - Closure 7th February 2022
Importance: High

Hi [Redacted]

Following on from the email below from [Redacted], we're interested in alternative ways to fill our oxo-biodegradable plastics research gap, specifically the impact they have on the environment.

We had hoped DEFRA would procure a UK wide piece of research that covered this subject but they weren't able to find someone to do the work. UCL are performing a piece of work that DEFRA think could be suitable for their needs but is maybe not going to fit in with our timeframe. Ms Slater has been clear that she wants to make some progress on this soon.

I'll put something in the calendars early next week to discuss per your previous email if that's OK and we can discuss options.

Thanks,

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Sent: 19 January 2022 09:25
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,
[Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,
[Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Subject: RE: CRF Call for Applications 2022/23 - Closure 7th February 2022
Importance: High

[Redacted], just to put down one marker at this stage for research to collate available evidence on environmental impacts of oxo-degradable products. We will consider wider opportunities and get back to you

[Redacted], this is timely given yesterday's update on risks to addressing our ongoing evidence gap, given uncertainty on other options previously being explored. Please could you pick up with [Redacted] and also consider with [Redacted] any other potential CRF projects that could support delivery of next stage of work on SUP?

- In accordance with procurement policy **all** contracts will be awarded through competitive tendering.
- As a consequence, proposals should not be discussed with potential bidders.
- RESAS will seek approval from Ministers for the projects being taken forward and manage the procurement of the contract.
- **ALL** Business areas will need to provide a Contract Manager to manage the day-to-day operation of the procurement and the ongoing contract, **PLEASE NOTE:** if you have not contract managed a project before there is training available and lots of guidance on the subject that your DPO can provide you with and we strongly recommend you do look at this as it will help you run the contract smoothly and with no major issues that you are unable to deal with, having said that your DPO is still there to support you throughout the life of the contract.
- The presumption is that outputs resulting from CRF are published and it will be the responsibility of the Contract Manager to ensure that occurs. The DPO will require a link to your publication or an explanation of why it hasn't been published.
- The assigned DPO will walk you through the procurement process from start to finish and will support you throughout the duration of the contract.
- Depending on availability of funds following on from this round, there may be a further call later in FY 2022/23.
- As soon as a project has been approved the DPO will email you with the next steps, the email will be accompanied with an RPA, Skeleton Specification and Award Criteria Documents for you to complete within the given timescales.
- Please be aware that all projects will take a **minimum of 8 weeks** to procure depending on the value of the contract, the clock will start on this timescale when you email me the RPA, Skeleton Specification and Award Criteria Documents. However, this timescale is not guaranteed and can be subject to delays, for a number of reasons that your DPO will go through.
- Finally, please be aware that the contracts need to be **concluded in this financial year** which means **contract end dates of no later than 11th March 2023**, unless in exceptional circumstances, which will need to be addressed in your Expression of Interest.

Please submit all applications to me no later than **12:00, 7th February 2022**. If you wish to discuss anything contained in this minute or advice on filling in the template, please contact me directly.

Regards

[Redacted]

By email 28/02/22

Thanks for the update [Redacted], good news!

I would expect that we'll need an academic report and accessible summary.

In terms of the project brief, [Redacted] was going to check-in with legal colleagues to see if they have views on what we need to ensure we develop a legally robust evidence base in this area. [Redacted], it would also be good to see if Defra will let us see their project brief on this topic.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Sent: 25 February 2022 11:29
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,
cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Subject: RE: Oxo-degradables research

Hi [Redacted],

I have an offer from [Redacted]at JHI to undertake an evidence review for you.
[Redacted]

We now need to agree broad scope of the review and timings. I have started to put together a brief one page specification that we can agree with [Redacted]. It doesn't need to be particularly detailed but if there is anything more you would like to add about the specifics of what you want the review to look at please add it. Are there more specific research questions that you want answered? I have just put a very general assessment of the environmental impact of the product. I also thought that some background on the products and what they are used for would be useful, but you may already have this.

Also if there is a particular format that you want the outputs in please specify. Do you want an academic report, or a simple summary of key points or both?

Once we are clear on the ask I can find out how long [Redacted]thinks it will take her to complete it.

Cheers
[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Sent: 23 February 2022 16:51

To: [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Subject: RE: Oxo-degradables research

Hi [Redacted],

Welcome!

I have reached out to our researcher colleagues at JHI and SRUC to see if they feel competent and are available to do this. I will let you know when I hear back.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Sent: 23 February 2022 10:57
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Subject: RE: Oxo-degradables research

Hi [Redacted],

Nice to meet you via email. I have taken over from [Redacted], and today is day 3 in the new role!

I would very much welcome your view on the available options to undertake the oxo-degradables research. To help me get up-to-date with the research options, would you be able to provide a steer this week?

Thanks a lot,
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Sent: 21 February 2022 13:51
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,
Subject: Oxo-degradables research

Hi [Redacted]

Hope you had a good weekend? Any responses from SRUC and JHI on the invitation to do the oxo-degradables research?

If not we'll need to make a decision soon on what to do next. From your point of view what do you think our best option would be to get this research done in time to make some progress on the ban ASAP?

Regards,

[Redacted]

SPECIFICATION FOR REVIEW OF EVIDENCE ON OXO-BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC PRODUCTS

Purpose

This research specification sets out the actions needed to support Scottish Government (SG) officials and analysts in implementing Article 5 of the Directive (EU) 2019/904 on the reduction of certain plastic products on the environment (the EU SUP Directive).

Article 5 of the EU SUP Directive requires that all oxo-degradable plastic products are banned. The EU SUP Directive defines oxo-degradable plastic as meaning:

plastic materials that include additives which, through oxidation, lead to the fragmentation of the plastic material into micro-fragments or to chemical decomposition

The EU SUP Directive states products made from oxo-degradable plastic should be covered by the Directive as that type of plastic “does not properly biodegrade and thus contributes to microplastic pollution in the environment, is not compostable, negatively affects the recycling of conventional plastic and fails to deliver a proven environmental benefit”.

Manufacturers of oxo-biodegradable plastic products (a sub-set of oxo-degradables) claim that oxo-biodegradable plastic products are sufficiently different and better for the environment than oxo-degradables and so shouldn't be included in this ban of oxo-degradable plastic. Oxo-biodegradation has been defined by CEN/TR 15351:200611 as "degradation resulting from oxidative and cell-mediated phenomena, either simultaneously or successively"

A review of the evidence on the environmental harm of oxo-biodegradable plastic products is therefore required. The following proposal for an evidence review seeks to identify what is currently known about the impact of oxo-biodegradable plastic products on the environment. (For clarity, this research specification is not requesting any review of the evidence on the environmental harm of oxo-degradable plastic products as that is already stated in the EU SUP Directive.)

Analyses/ Outputs

A review of all available evidence, published peer reviewed and grey literature to identify:

- An explanation of how oxo-biodegradable plastic products differ in comparison to oxo-degradable plastic as defined in the EU SUP Directive.
- What oxo-biodegradable plastic products are on the market in Scotland
- The environmental impact of oxo-biodegradable plastic products
- Any differences in environmental impact between oxo-degradable and oxo-biodegradable materials

The required outputs are a fully referenced report, and a short accessible summary of the main findings.

Policy Sponsor

[Redacted] is policy sponsor for this request.

Timing & Staff Days

The scale of available evidence on this topic is currently unknown. It is estimated that this review comprises approximately 5 days work.

By email 02/03/2022

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot,

Sent: 02 March 2022 10:56

To: [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk, [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk,

Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,

[Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot, [Redacted]@gov.scot,

[Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk

Subject: RE: review into environmental impacts of oxo-degradable products - call down project

Hi [Redacted],

I attach a short specification of what we require from this review. Essentially it is a review of evidence to establish the degree to which oxo-biodegradable plastic products cause pollution of the environment.

I am really not sure how much literature there is out there on the topic and therefore how long it will take you to complete. We would really appreciate for you to undertake the review as quickly as possible but are also mindful of your other work. If you are able to give an indication of the timeframe that you think you could do this in that would be great.

I am copying in my Single-Use Plastics Policy colleagues [Redacted] who may be able to give you more details on the requirement. Perhaps a short conversation about it would be helpful to you for discussing scope and timings?

Thanks very much and look forward to hearing from you.



EU SUP

Oxo-degradables - cal

[Redacted]

[Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>

Sent: 25 February 2022 10:03

To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>; [Redacted]@sruc.ac.uk>;

[Redacted]@sruc.ac.uk; [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>

Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>;

[Redacted]@sac.co.uk

Subject: RE: review into environmental impacts of oxo-degradable products - call down project

Hi [Redacted],

Thank you, looking forward to working on this topic- evidence gathering on oxo-biodegradable plastics.

Thank you

Kind Regards

[Redacted]

From[Redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 25 February 2022 09:43

To: [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>; [Redacted]@sruc.ac.uk>; [Redacted]@sruc.ac.uk;

[Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>; [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>

Subject: RE: review into environmental impacts of oxo-degradable products - call down project

[External email]

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Hi **[Redacted]**,

That's great. Thanks a lot. **[Redacted]** will follow up with you shortly.

Cheers

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>

Sent: 23 February 2022 20:10

To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@sruc.ac.uk>; [Redacted]@sruc.ac.uk;

[Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>; [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>

Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>;

[Redacted]@sac.co.uk

Subject: Re: review into environmental impacts of oxo-degradable products - call down project

Hi **[Redacted]**,

[Redacted] (included in this reply) would be interested in taking on this work. This email is simply to make that connection. Over to you.

Cheers

[Redacted]

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From: [Redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 4:48:34 PM

To: [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>; [Redacted]@sruc.ac.uk>; [Redacted]@sruc.ac.uk

Cc: [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted]@hutton.ac.uk>;

[Redacted]@sac.co.uk>

Subject: review into environmental impacts of oxo-degradable products - call down project

[External email]

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Dear [Redacted]

I am writing to you all as part of the RESAS SRP C4 circular economy research team as I am not quite sure who to direct this request to.

Our policy team are in need of an evidence review to support our implementation of Article 5 of the EU Single-use Plastics Directive. The Directive requires that all oxo-degradable products are banned. However, manufacturers of oxo-biodegradable products (a sub-set of oxo-degradables) claim that this substance is sufficiently different and better for the environment than oxo-degradables and so shouldn't be included in this ban. As a matter of urgency we need to determine if there is evidence to support this assertion.

We are therefore wondering if somebody from SRUC or JHI would be able to conduct a review of the evidence on this for us through the calldown budget? My sense is that there is probably limited evidence available but it would be good to know if this is indeed the case. I think the topic is materials science but I suppose a general review could be undertaken by a non-specialist.

I would be grateful if you could let me know if this is something that you might be able to help with? Happy to follow up with more details.

Thanks

[Redacted]

Excerpt from Invitation to Tender for Grant Funding (ITGF) pack for the Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment Science Portfolio 2016-21.

INTRODUCTION

14. Relevant definitions for the components of underpinning capacity are:

- **Support to policy** - this activity has two key strands:
 - The establishment and active maintenance of a network of staff that policy officials can access via designated points of contact. The activity includes the providing supporting interpretation of information on science matters, guidance, attendance at working groups, background information and signposting to key documents, based upon policy demands, and;
 - where necessary, and as agreed with policy contacts, support may be required where significant additional analysis or collation of existing information is required. The timescale for completion of the work is determined by the complexity of the requirement.

UNDERPINNING CAPACITY SPECIFICATION

1. Function – ‘Support for policy’

Policy context

Over time the Scottish Government’s investment in programmes of strategic research has been instrumental in developing a significant and valuable capacity to provide scientific support direct to policy officials. The formal recognition and allocation of a resource to this function will facilitate this channel of communication. Experience from the current programme suggests that it will be important that any activity noted as support to policy has a clear focus, preceded by consultation with policy customers. Beyond the need for specific expertise on relatively narrow areas, there is an ongoing and growing requirement for more holistic interpretations of material on cross-cutting issues.

In addition to its investment in programmes of strategic research the Scottish Government also utilises other resources to support shorter term requirements initiated by policy. As a consequence of past investments in its Main Research Providers (MRPs) these organisations are often the best placed to deliver this work. In such circumstances the procurement procedures must still be followed and the commencement of the work and delivery of the final product is inevitably delayed. Making resources available for this type of work as part of underpinning capacity funding will reduce bureaucracy and facilitate an improved service for the policy customer and the MRPs.

Required Outcome

The required outcome is twofold:

1. the establishment of an advisory network for policy officials with a designated cost centre and designated points of contact. Policy officials could approach

these when they needed to discuss particular issues where guidance, background information, or signposting to key documents is required. This activity may also include attendance and participation in working groups, as requested by policy teams.

2. A flexible system whereby RESAS and policy customers can approach specified points of contact and to initiate activity in support of policy. This stream should only be used where significant additional analysis or collation of existing information is required.

Additional information required

The tender will also need to include a description of the means by which policy requests will be handled and recorded, the areas of where support is available, and proposed standards of service, e.g. response times. Tenders will need to identify how decisions will be made regarding the need, scope and extent of the analytical work required, including how other sources of information will be drawn in, and the timing required for its completion. A description of the mechanisms put in place to record and monitor usage of the service and how customer feedback will be obtained and be used to adjust delivery of services over time.

Excerpt from James Hutton Institutes Underpinning Capacity submission 15/11/2015

B1. Support to Policy

Function: The policy support function will be organised as an advisory network of scientists for policy officers.

The aims will be:

- To provide scientific advice on an agreed set of topics.
- To act as a source of information and analysis on an agreed set of topics, including a point of contact into networks of expertise, 'signposting' to key documents of a scientific or technical nature, and related advice.
 - To provide a database of previous enquiries, and answers, to avoid duplication or inconsistency.