

Public administrative institution (PAI):

Registered office:

French Biodiversity Agency
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Delegated Directorate-General for Resources – Finance Department:

Public Procurement Department
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Contract no. 2025-MAPA20

**Assessment of ecosystem services in four marine protected areas in South Africa
and in France.**

ORDINARY CONTRACT AWARDED BY ADAPTED PROCEDURE

In accordance with legal and regulatory provisions
of the French Public Procurement Code of 1 April 2019
(Articles L2123-1 and R2123-1)

CONSULTATION REGULATION

(CR)

Deadline for receipt of tenders

17/07/2026 at 12:00 pm (Paris time)

Consultation authorised by the contracting authority

OFB General Director

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Presentation of the French Biodiversity Agency

The French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) is a public institution under the authority of the French Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture. It is dedicated to safeguarding biodiversity.

With regard to terrestrial, aquatic and marine environments, it contributes to the monitoring, preservation, management and restoration of terrestrial, aquatic and marine biodiversity, as well as to balanced and sustainable water management in coordination with the national policy to combat global warming.

The OFB carries out five parallel missions:

- environmental and wildlife health policing,
- sharing knowledge, research and expertise about species, habitats and their uses,
- supporting the implementation of public policies,
- assisting and supporting protected natural areas managers,
- supporting stakeholders and mobilising civil society.

1 SUBJECT AND SCOPE OF THE CONSULTATION

1.1 Buyer identification

Entity: FRENCH BIODIVERSITY AGENCY - Public administrative institution - PAI

Address: 12, Cours Louis Lumière –VINCENNES 94300

Buyer's website address: <https://www.ofb.gouv.fr/en>

Website address of the buyer's profile: <https://www.marches-publics.gouv.fr/entreprise>

1.2 Subject of the consultation

This contract concerns an advisory mission aiming to assess part of the range of ecosystem services provided by:

- Two marine protected areas (MPA) in South Africa, namely:
 - o The Addo Elephant National Park MPA and
 - o The Table Mountain National Park MPA.
- Two marine natural parks in France:
 - o The Mayotte Marine Natural Park,
 - o The Arcachon Basin Marine Natural Park.

This consultation is being launched within the framework of the South Africa-France Partnership for biodiversity and marine conservation, funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and jointly implemented by the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) and South African National Parks (SANParks).

The aim of this advisory mission is to apply a solid ecosystem services framework that is both relevant to a manager and from a political perspective, to assess, analyse and share the ecological, social and economic advantages of the MPAs in question.

The services expected are detailed in the special technical specifications (STS).

This is a contract concerning intellectual services. In accordance with the circular letter of 19 January 2022, these services call for highly specialised expertise and are justified due to the absence of internal skills and resources.

Environmental clause:

The very purpose of the contract is to carry out a study helping to control impacts on the environment.

In the interests of consistency and working in an exemplary manner, the service provider must take into account sustainable development objectives in the performance of its services.

1.3 Community nomenclature

The main classification, in accordance with the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV), is:

- ⇒ 79311000 - 7: Survey services

1.4 Division

The contract is divided into lots as follows:

Lot	Title	Provisional, non-contractual value, in euros and incl. VAT
1	Assessment of ecosystem services provided by 2 Marine Protected Areas in South Africa	20,000
2	Assessment of ecosystem services provided by 2 Marine Protected Areas in France	35,000

1.5 Procedure, form and value of the contract

The award procedure is the adapted procedure, in accordance with Articles L2123-1 and R2123-1 of the French Public Procurement Code (PPC)¹.

This is an ordinary, single-award contract.

It concerns the services listed in this document and in the breakdown of the total and lump-sum price (décomposition du prix global et forfaitaire, DPGF), appended to the deed of commitment.

The contract is awarded with a provisional total value of €55,000 incl. VAT, for all lots and for the entire duration of the contract.

The definitive value of the contract will be determined by the amount of the offer awarded to the service provider selected at the end of the consultation.

1.6 Place of performance

Lot	Places
1	South Africa - Addo Elephant National Park, - Table Mountain National Park.
2	France - The Mayotte Marine Natural Park (976), - The Arcachon Basin Marine Natural Park (33).

1.7 Contract duration

This contract **shall take effect from the date of notification** and for a fixed duration of ten (10) months.

1.8 Participation conditions

Candidates must present themselves individually or as part of a consortium of economic operators.

The OFB, as buyer and hereinafter referred to as the contracting authority, does not wish to impose any form of consortium, joint or with joint and several liability, on the successful tenderer.

The documents must specify the authorised representative and the form of the consortium (joint or with joint and several liability).

In the case of a joint consortium, the deed of commitment must specify the breakdown of services to be performed by each member of the consortium. A box is provided in the deed of commitment for this purpose.

Candidates are not allowed to submit several applications at the same time, acting as:

- Individual candidates and members of one or more consortia;
- Members of several consortia.

In accordance with Article R2142-26 of the PPC, the composition of the consortium may not be modified between the date of submission of applications and the date of signature of this contract, except in the cases cited by the same article.

¹ French Public Procurement Code of 1 April 2019

2 CONSULTATION CONDITIONS

2.1 Key features

Variations are not permitted and no additional services are planned.

2.2 Tender validity period

Tenders are valid for 120 days from the deadline for receipt of tenders.

2.3 Main methods of funding

The services will be funded as follows:: Entirely funded by the France-South Africa cooperation project for biodiversity and marine conservation, led by the OFB and funded by the Agence Française de Développement

3 TENDER DOCUMENTS (TDs)

3.1 Contents

The TDs contain the following documents:

- These consultation regulations (CR);
 - o In French and in English
- The special administrative specifications (SAS);
 - o In French and in English
- Two special technical specifications (STS), one for each lot;
 - o For lot 1, one in French and one in English.
- The breakdown of the total and lump-sum price (décomposition du prix global et forfaitaire, DPGF), one for each lot.
 - o For lot 1, with a tab in English.

3.2 Withdrawal

Candidates can download the TDs in full and submit their response via the platform used by the OFB at the following address:

<https://www.marches-publics.gouv.fr/?page=entreprise.EntrepriseHome>

Contract reference: 2025-MAPA20

In order to decompress and read the documents made available by the public authority, candidates must have software enabling them to read the following formats:

- .zip/.rar
- .docx, .xlsx, .pdf

The sharing of information is secured using the https protocol.

The TDs cannot be withdrawn from the contracting authority's premises, either on paper or electronically.

Any request to send the TDs will not be granted.

3.3 Amendments to the details in the TDs

The contracting authority reserves the right to amend the details in the TDs at the latest six (6) days before the deadline for the receipt of tenders. Candidates will then have to respond on the basis of the modified file without being able to raise any complaint on this subject.

If the period of six (6) days, left to allow candidates time to take note of any additional elements of the study, could not be respected due to the deadline set for the submission of tenders, this deadline will be deferred to ensure this period is maintained.

If the deadline for the receipt of tenders is deferred while the candidates are reviewing the file, the previous provision shall apply in accordance with this new date.

Amendments to the TDs will be published on the digitalisation platform: www.marches-publics.gouv.fr

It should also be noted that candidates may not modify the documents contained in the TDs.

IMPORTANT: Candidates are advised to create an account and log in to the State purchasing

digitalisation platform before downloading the TDs, so that they can be informed of any amendments/supplements made to their account, of any changes to the consultation during the consultation and of any answers provided by the contracting authority to questions asked by other candidates.

Candidates who do not log in beforehand will not be notified. Under no circumstances may the contracting authority be held responsible for a lack of information provided to candidates who have not registered or who have not downloaded the updates to the amended documents.

4 SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS AND TENDERS

Sending an electronic response is compulsory, according to the terms and conditions specified in this CR.

Candidates' files must be written entirely in French or accompanied by a French translation. Prices are expressed in EURO (€).

Candidates can submit their applications in a simplified way using the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD). They must complete the ESPD form and attach all documents on their professional aptitude, economic and financial capacity and technical and professional capabilities on which the ESPD logo does not appear.

Personal data shared within the context of applications and/or tenders (e.g. CV content) will be used strictly for the analysis of the applications and/or tenders for this consultation.

Candidate's single point of contact:

All correspondence relating to the consultation will be sent to candidates via the State purchasing platform (PLACE) exclusively to the email address provided by them, which must remain valid until the end of the consultation.

4.1 Documents constituting the application

Candidates are encouraged to submit their application in the form of an electronic European Single Procurement Document (ESPD).

This response channel is intended to replace the forms DC1 and DC2. Only the successful tenderer selected will be required to sign the deed of commitment, which will replace the signature of all other documents in the application.

The ESPD form is available on the Ministry of Finance's CHORUS PRO website at the following address: <https://dume.chorus-pro.gouv.fr>

The ESPD only has probative value in .xml format. However, after creating your ESPD, we request that you make **a copy in .pdf format and attach it to your application.**

In the event of technical issues on the platform mentioned *above*, if the candidate is unable to produce the information and documents requested by the contracting authority, they are permitted to prove their legal, economic and financial capacity by any other means deemed appropriate by the contracting authority **(including using the forms DC1, DC2 and K-bis, etc.)**.

1° - Identification document

The ESPD or the duly completed letter of application (based on the template in form [DC 1](#)), including the sworn statement (relating to prohibitions on tendering) in accordance with article R2143-3 of the PPC: "In support of their application, the candidate produces: *a sworn statement to prove that it does not fall into any of the cases mentioned in articles L2141-1 to L2141-5 and L2141-7 to L2141-11, in particular that they meet the obligations concerning the employment of workers with disabilities defined in articles L5212-1 to L5212-11 of the French Labour Code*"

2° - Conditions of participation relating to the candidates' professional aptitude, economic and financial capacity and technical and professional capabilities

The buyer shall ensure that the implementation conditions are related to and in proportion with the purpose of the contract (Art. L2142-1 of the PPC).

A. Economic and financial capacity

- Annual turnover in the field of activity for the last three financial years

If the information on turnover is not available for the entire period requested, enter the date on which the economic operator was established or started their activity.

B. Technical and professional capabilities

- Description of the main services previously provided over the last three financial years
- Annual average number of employees over the last three financial years

To demonstrate its professional, technical or financial capacity, a company may submit its application as part of a consortium with other companies.

The professional, technical and financial capacities of consortium members are assessed globally; each individual company is not required to have all the skills required for the performance of the contract.

However, in this case, each company making up the consortium must provide all the documents and information requested in the advertising notice and in this CR.

Proof of the candidate's capabilities can be provided by any equivalent means, as well as by equivalent certificates from bodies established in other Member States of the European Union.

In application of article R2143-12 of the PPC, the candidate may rely on the capacities of other economic operators, whatever the legal nature of the links between the candidate and these operators (sub-contracting or other). If this option is used, the candidate must provide evidence of the capacities of the economic operator(s) concerned, and must prove that it will have access to these capacities when performing the public contract. This proof can be provided by any appropriate means before the contract is awarded, in particular by a certificate of the provision of resources duly signed by the authorised representative of the operator on which the application relies.

If the candidate responds via the ESPD and decides to sub-contract part of the contract or to use the capacities of sub-contractors to carry out part of the contract, each sub-contractor must complete an ESPD.

4.2 Documents constituting the tender

Any tenders that do not meet the requirements listed in the TDs are irregular in accordance with Article L2152-2 of the PPC. Tenders will be examined in accordance with Articles R2152-1 to R2152-3 of the PPC. Irregular tenders may be rectified at the buyer's request under the conditions of Article R2152-2 of the PPC.

Candidates submitting a tender must present a file containing the following documents:

⇒ **For the assessment of criterion 1: technical value**

A technical brief detailing:

1.1 An understanding of the context, challenges and expectations:

- An in-depth understanding of the challenges associated with the management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), environmental governance and marine conservation policies, especially in a French context.
- Their knowledge on the assessment of ecosystem services, in particular relating to protected areas, and the use of ecosystem services provided as a tool to promote protected areas, in particular marine protected areas. In this context and according to their principles, the candidate shall explain the strengths and limitations of such tools for the management of marine spaces.
- The ability to integrate their intervention into existing dynamics, consistent with institutional, scientific and operational frameworks, and to structure their work with that of other participants, in particular as part of an approach combining their expertise with that of a second service provider (working on the other lot in the consultation).
- Any knowledge of the areas of the parks in question.
- If applicable:
 - o Their understanding of the challenges of international cooperation, in particular in bilateral or intergovernmental contexts;

- Any interest in contributing to cooperation dynamics between France and South Africa, regarding the exchange of knowledge and best practices in marine conservation.
 - Knowledge of the applicable legislative and regulatory framework and the principles and practices of marine conservation.
- Examples or demonstration of relevant experience through similar missions, in particular related to:
 - Organisations involved in international or intergovernmental cooperations,
 - Work at the intersection of science and politics, to provide better communications about the usefulness of the services provided by the protected areas to the public,
 - The production of scientific and operational deliverables, ideally involving an assessment of ecosystem services provided in a geographical area or ecosystem similar to those studied.

1.2 Methodology and organisation

- A structured and thorough methodology, tailored to the purposes of the contract, based on proven approaches to the assessment of ecosystem services:
 - Potentially including the creation of a 'state of play' based on the data provided or collected.
 - Relevant analyses in accordance with the objectives of the contract.
 - A scientific and methodological justification is expected, supported by internationally recognised examples and methods, or those already applied in similar assessments.
- A phasing proposal, detailing the framework requested in the STS and including the leadership and the plans for providing support to the teams, managers and scientists in the French or South African parks in question.
- The methods for the implementation of activities, specifying:
 - The analytical tools used (including statistical software);
 - The data collection, processing and analysis methods;
 - The methods for interacting with stakeholders (research stakeholders, managers, public decision-makers, 'users').
- Their ability to:
 - Structure and lead several activities simultaneously;
 - Ensure compliance with the contractual deadlines;
 - Produce high-quality deliverables, tailored to the scientific and operational expectations.
- If applicable, the methods for sharing and disseminating the results, based on examples or proposals that the candidate deems to be relevant.

1.3 Human and material resources

The human and material resources to be deployed for the implementation of the assignment shall be presented in a detailed and structured manner, enabling an assessment of the candidate's capacity to mobilize a competent team suited to the requirements of the contract.

The candidate shall in particular present:

- The composition of the project team, clearly identifying:
 - the project manager/lead consultant, responsible for coordination, compliance with deadlines, and the quality of deliverables;
 - the experts mobilized, specifying their respective roles in each action or phase of the assignment.
- The qualifications and experience of each team member, highlighting:
 - their educational background and areas of technical expertise (marine ecology, environmental economics, ecosystem services assessment, conservation policies, environmental law, international cooperation, etc.);
 - their relevant references in relation to the objectives of the contract, particularly any experience in ecosystem services assessment, management or study of marine protected areas, or work at the science-policy interface;
 - any knowledge of the territories or geographical contexts concerned (French marine parks, South Africa);
 - a concise curriculum vitae (maximum two pages) shall be provided for each team member.

- The allocation of workload and level of involvement of each expert for each action or deliverable, in the form of a table or any other format allowing a clear understanding of the team's internal organization.
- The material and software resources envisaged for conducting the analyses (statistical tools, databases, GIS, etc.), insofar as these have not already been detailed in the methodological section.

Each service provider may respond as they wish to one or both of the lots in this contract; a separate proposal is requested for each lot. Given the desire for collaboration between service providers responding to different lots, particular attention will be paid to proficiency in English, as the South African context makes this essential.

Furthermore, for lot 1, "South Africa", it is acceptable to submit this technical brief in English in addition to the French document. Given the English-speaking context, the analysis of proposals will be based on the documents submitted in English for lot 1, if available.

⇒ **For the assessment of criterion 2: Environmental approach**

A note on the environmental approach taken in the context of the performance of this contract:

What measures has the candidate taken to reduce their environmental footprint in the performance of the services under the contract?

- Optimising travel, sharing journeys;
- Environmentally responsible practices among the people responsible for performing the services, eco-labelled equipment used;
- Responsible hosting of data and a responsible document consultation platform;
- Animal welfare.

The company's general policies will not be taken into account, unless these are directly and concretely linked to the contract.

⇒ **For the assessment of criterion 3: Pricing**

In light of the duly completed and unaltered DPGF, in accordance with the template provided.

COMMENT

The special specifications details all the technical and methodological components that must be included in the candidate's tender and sets out the administrative elements that will govern the life of the contract.

5 TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection of applications and the examination of tenders will be carried out in compliance with the fundamental principles of public procurement.

5.1 Verification of applications

The contracting authority will open and verify the contents of the applications.

The contracting authority verifies the compliance of applications with Article 4.1 of this CR; before proceeding with the examination of applications, if it finds that the documents requested are missing or incomplete, **it may**, in accordance with Articles R2143-11, R2143-12 and R2143-16 of the PPC, decide to invite all candidates concerned to produce or complete these documents within a time limit that is the same for everyone.

Candidates whose applications are inadmissible in accordance with legal and regulatory provisions, who are not qualified to carry out their professional activity, or whose economic and financial capacity or technical and professional capabilities appear manifestly inadequate in the light of the application documents and the tasks covered by the contract will be eliminated.

In application of Article R2144-3 of the PPC, the contracting authority reserves the right to perform these checks only after the tenders have been ranked.

The candidate ranked first may be asked to add to or explain the supporting documents and evidence provided or obtained.

If a candidate or tenderer is disqualified from submitting a tender, does not meet the conditions for participation or is unable to produce the required supporting documents, evidence, additions or explanations within the allotted time, the application is declared inadmissible and the candidate is eliminated. In this case, the tenderer whose tender was ranked immediately after its own, is asked to produce the necessary documents.

If necessary, this process can be repeated as long as there are still admissible applications or tenders that have not been eliminated on the grounds that they are inappropriate, irregular or unacceptable.

5.2 Selection of tenders

This decision is made under the conditions provided for in Articles R2152-6, R2152-7, R2152-11 and R2152-12 of the PPC and the tenders are ranked.

The contacting authority is entitled to request further clarification on the tender as required.

The weighted selection criteria for the tenders are:

	Criteria (and sub-criteria)	Weighting of sub-criteria	Weighting criteria
1	Technical value assessed in view of the technical brief:		55%
1.1	<i>Understanding of the context, challenges and expectations</i>	30%	
1.2	<i>Methodology and organisation</i>	20%	
1.3	<i>Human and material resources</i>	5%	
2	Environmental approach in view of the note		10%
3	Pricing analyses on the basis of the DPGF		35%

Tender scoring method

Tenders are analysed according to the above criteria.

The contract is awarded to the tenderer submitting the most economically advantageous tender, corresponding to the tender ranked first in the tender ranking.

Tenders that do not meet all the expected technical requirements as expressed in the special specifications will be deemed to be irregular and will be rejected by the contracting authority.

However, in accordance with Article R2152-2 of the PPC, the buyer reserves the right to rectify these, unless the tenders are abnormally low.

Results of the examination of tenders

In accordance with Article R2152-1 of the PPC, unacceptable or inappropriate tenders will be rejected.

If no application or tender has been submitted within the specified deadline, or if only applications that are irregular or unacceptable within the meaning of Article R2144-7 of the PPC, or tenders that are inappropriate within the meaning of Article L2152-4 of the PPC have been submitted, the procedure will be declared unsuccessful and may be followed by a negotiated procedure without prior publication or call for competition in accordance with Article R2122-2 of the PPC.

5.3 Negotiation

After analysing the tenders, the contracting authority may negotiate with all candidates whose tenders are in compliance and have been analysed.

Negotiation with the candidates will take place in accordance with the terms and conditions to be defined by the contracting authority and of which the candidates will be informed in due course (exchange of emails and/or face-to-face negotiation with candidates). The components to be negotiated will be determined on the basis of the candidates' technical and/or financial tenders.

The OFB reserves the right to award the contract on the basis of the initial tenders and without negotiation, in accordance with Article R2123-5 of the French Public Procurement Code.

The negotiation may not concern the purpose of the contract, nor may it substantially modify the features as defined in the consultation documents.

Negotiation discussions may be held:

- Either in the form of an electronic written exchange;
- Or in the form of a telephone interview or at the contracting authority's premises. In this case, the schedule of the meetings is determined by mutual agreement between the representatives of the contracting authority and the candidates concerned.

These discussions may, if applicable, lead to one or more aspects of each of the candidates' initial tenders being amended and/or supplemented. In this case, the contracting authority shall invite the candidates to submit a new version of the documents concerned to take into account the results of the negotiations and to finalise the ranking of the tenders accordingly.

6 AWARD OF THE CONTRACT

As sufficient proof that the candidate is not in a case of exclusion mentioned in Articles L2141-1, L2141-4 and L2141-5 of the PPC, the buyer will accept a sworn statement.

As sufficient proof that the candidate is not in a case of exclusion mentioned in Article L2141-2 of the PPC, the buyer will accept certificates issued by the competent administrations and bodies. The list of taxes and social security contributions that require the issuance of a certificate and the list of competent administrations and bodies is included in the Decree of 22 March 2019 setting out the list of taxes and social security contributions that require the issuance of certificates for the awarding of public procurement contracts.

Candidates established abroad must produce a certificate issued by the authorities and bodies of their country of origin or country in which they are established.

6.1 Ranking of tenders

In accordance with the criteria defined above, the tenders are ranked in descending order.

6.2 Deed of commitment (DoC) and documents to be produced by the successful tenderer

After being informed of the contract award and in order to formalise the contract, the contracting authority sends the Deed of Commitment (DoC) to the successful candidate to be signed.

The DoC must be dated and signed by a person duly authorised to enter into commitments on behalf of the company (either the individual candidate, or all the members of the consortium or, in the event of authorisation granted by all the members of the consortium, the representative), with supporting documents concerning the powers of the persons so authorised (in particular, the signing authority).

The successful candidate will be requested to electronically sign the deed of commitment using a qualified signature certificate, "e-IDAS", in accordance with the [Decree of 22 March 2019 on the electronic signature of public procurement contracts](#).

Advanced electronic signatures require a certificate for electronic signature to be obtained in advance. Qualified certificates for electronic signature within the meaning of Regulation No 910/2014 "e-IDAS" are issued by qualified electronic certification service providers listed on the ANSSI website <https://cyber.gouv.fr/obtenir-un-certificat-de-signature-electronique#:~:text=Les%20certificats%20de%20signature%20%C3%A9lectronique%20qualifi%C3%A9s%20au%20sens,qualifi%C3%A9s.%20L%27ANSSI%20ne%20d%C3%A9livre%20pas%20de%20tels%20certificats.>

It is therefore advisable to plan ahead and obtain this certificate as soon as you are aware that the contract has been awarded. This can take up to ten days, corresponding to the standstill period between informing the successful candidate and signing the contract.

Only in the event of a duly justified technical difficulty preventing the successful tenderer from signing electronically may they be authorised to sign by hand and send the original copy of the deed of commitment to the address indicated.

Other documents and information likely to be requested and checked that have not already been provided or retrieved automatically:

- In the event of redress, a copy of the judgement(s) given;
- In the case of co-contracting, an application form signed by each co-contractor, unless the tender is signed by all co-contractors or the mandate;
- A valid insurance certificate;
- Up-to-date tax and social security clearance certificates (e.g. URSSAF certificate of compliance, tax certificate);

If, within the time specified in the information provided to the successful candidate, the candidate is unable to provide the documents requested, or if discrepancies are noted between the tender signed and the tender initially submitted or finalised with the buyer, the contract will be awarded to the next tenderer in the order of ranking.

6.3 Making adjustments with the successful candidate

In accordance with the provisions of Article R2152-13 of the PPC, the contracting authority may, in agreement with the successful candidate, adjust the components of the contract, without these modifications calling into question the substantial characteristics, in particular the financial characteristics, of the contract.

7 CONDITIONS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS AND TENDERS

Tenders must be submitted by electronic means at the following address:

<https://www.marches-publics.gouv.fr/?page=entreprise.EntrepriseHome>

Before the deadline for the submission of tenders indicated on the first page of the CR

A guide to using the platform for companies is available to download at the following address:

<https://www.marches-publics.gouv.fr/?page=Entreprise.EntrepriseGuide>

An online support service is available from the following Support link or via the Support tab.

Online support allows you to search for an answer via an FAQ, filtered by category.

If the FAQ does not provide a complete answer, you can fill out a form to create an online request. This online request form allows us to retrieve your login details and thus pre-fill in your request.

A telephone support service is also available for companies wishing to submit tenders for public contracts.

An electronic signature is not required for this consultation.

7.1 Terms and conditions for the submission of tenders by electronic means

Anti-virus

All files forming part of the application and/or tender must be free of any computer virus, and must be processed in advance by the candidate with a regularly updated anti-virus program. The same applies to any other files exchanged as part of this procedure.

The contracting authority may securely archive any file containing a computer virus. It will then be deemed never to have been received.

The time zone used on the platform is Paris time. All events taking place at the submission portal are time-stamped by the Marches-Publics.info server clock, which in turn is linked to two external "reliable time servers". Only this time reference will prevail when qualifying "late" tenders. It's advisable to make sure that your clock is set correctly and takes into account any deviations from this time reference.

Signature tool used to sign files

Candidates may use the signature tool of their choice.

Case 1: The candidate uses the PLACE signature tool. In this case, the tenderer is exempt from providing any instructions for use or information;

Case 2: If the candidate uses a signature tool other than the one provided on PLACE, they must comply with the following two obligations:

- Produce the signature in XAdES, CAdES or PAdES format;
- Allow the signature to be verified by submitting, at the same time, any elements needed to check the validity of the signature and the integrity of the document, free of charge.

The format recommended and used by the OFB to affix the signature to the document is the PAdES (PDF Advanced Electronic Signatures) format which, unlike the CAdES and XAdES formats, allows the signature to be viewed directly in the DoC.

7.2 Backup copy procedures

Candidates may, if they wish, send a backup copy (on paper or electronically) to the address below:

OFB
Finance Department
Public Procurement Department
125 impasse Adam Smith – Immeuble le Tabella
34470 Pérols

The backup copy must be placed in a sealed envelope clearly marked:

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CONTRACT NO. 2025-MAPA26
Assessment of ecosystem services in four marine protected areas in South Africa and in France.
CANDIDATE'S NAME + DO NOT OPEN
BACKUP COPY

Or

If they so wish, candidates may hand in their backup copy by courier or by delivering by hand with acknowledgement of receipt to the address given above, in compliance with the OFB's opening hours².

Candidates who send a backup copy electronically (USB stick, etc.) or on paper **must send this copy within the time limit set for the submission of applications or tenders**. The copy must comply with the terms and conditions for submitting tenders.

Documents requiring a signature must be signed electronically.

This backup copy will only be opened in two specific circumstances:

- if a malicious program is detected by the contracting authority (virus),
- if an application or tender has been sent electronically and has not been received within the deadline or could not be opened, provided that the backup copy was received within the deadline.

Backup copies that the contracting authority does not need to open will be destroyed at the end of the procedure.

8 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

8.1 Request for additional information as part of the consultation and amendments to the TDs made by the buyer

Before submitting tenders, candidates may ask questions on the present consultation up to nine (9) calendar days before the deadline for the submission of tenders. They will receive a response within six (6) calendar days before the deadline for the submission of tenders, at the latest. These questions must be asked via the PLACE platform.

Candidates' attention is drawn to the fact that the contracting authority will no longer be required to answer any questions that candidates may ask after the above-mentioned deadline.

The contracting authority reserves the right to make non-substantial amendments to the TDs at the latest six (6) calendar days before the deadline for the receipt of tenders. Candidates will then have to respond on the basis of the modified file without being able to raise any complaint on this subject.

If the period of six (6) calendar days, left to allow candidates time to take note of any additional elements of the study, could not be respected due to the deadline set for the submission of tenders, this deadline will be deferred to ensure this period is maintained.

If the deadline for the receipt of tenders is deferred while the candidates are reviewing the file, the previous provision shall apply in accordance with this new date.

² OFB opening hours: 09:00-12:00; 14:00-16:00.

8.2 Appeal procedures

In the event of a dispute, only French law will apply.

The French courts will have exclusive jurisdiction.

The court with territorial jurisdiction is:

Tribunal Administratif de Melun
43, Rue du Général de Gaulle - P.O. Box 8630
77000 MELUN
Tel: +33 1 60 56 66 30
Email: greffe.ta-melun@juradm.fr
Website: <https://melun.tribunal-administratif.fr/>

The following appeal procedures are available to candidates:

- Precontractual application for interim relief provided for in Articles L.551-1 to L.551-12 and R.551-1 to R.551-6 of the French Code of Administrative Justice (CAJ), which may be exercised before the contract is signed.
- Contractual application for interim relief provided for in Articles L.551-13 to L.551-23 and R.551-7 to R.551-10 of the CAJ, which may be exercised within the time limits set out in Article R.551-7 of the CAJ.
- Appeal for an abuse of power against an administrative decision under the conditions provided for in Articles R. 411-1 to R. 432-4 of the CAJ, and which may be exercised within two (2) months of notification or publication of the body's decision (the recourse may not, however, be exercised after the contract has been signed).
- Appeal in which the court has full jurisdiction, contesting the validity of the contract, open to unsuccessful candidates and third parties justifying an injured interest which can be exercised within two (2) months of the date on which the conclusion of the contract is made public.

For informational purposes, you can also apply to the administrative court via the digital application Télérecours citoyens, accessible via the website: <https://www.telerecours.fr/>