|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| RWM Tender Ref: RWM504 RWM505 | Tender Title: RWM504 Understanding the Long-Term Behaviour of Alternative Backfill for DNLEU Disposal – Cement Focused PhD GrantRWM505 Understanding the Long-Term Behaviour of Alternative Backfill for DNLEU Disposal – Radionuclide Focused PhD Grant |
| RWM Customer: Neda Mobasha | Procurement Lead: Shana Wood |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ref No** | **Clarification Question** | **RWM Response** | **Date of Question** | **Response Date** |
| Q1 | The call states that RWM is looking to start these projects in October 2021. Is there flexibility to start a year later (October 2022)?  | We can offer some flexibility around time of the start (2-3 months) but I am not really sure about next year. There is an allocation of budget for this project in this financial year and management can decide for a move to next year. You can mention any issues in your proposal if you wish and then team will decide, if the proposal is accepted they might agree with a later start. I wanted to mention that DNLEU backfill topic is just launching now and this a big research area of interest for RWM. We have RSO PhD calls around Nov 2021 and you can submit your proposals (open topic or from the selected topics) for a start in Sept 2022 and this topic and cement backfill are still of main interest for RWM.  | 3/05/2021 8:23 | 03/05/2021 15:04 |
| Q2 | The call refers to “phosphate-based cement” – presumably RWM is most interested in the performance of magnesium potassium phosphate cement. In addition to MKPC, we would like to include other potential phosphate-based cements in our bid. Would this be of interest to RWM?    | On the phosphate cement, we are starting from blank sheet of paper. This is a start for this type of cement in RWM and we are interested to gain knowledge not only on MKPC but also other potential phosphate-based cements. I think it is valuable to have an envelope of all potential phosphate cements and investigate which one(s) can be most suitable and effective as a backfill for DNLEU.  | 3/05/2021 8:23 | 03/05/2021 15:04 |
| Q3 | Can you please confirm whether my understanding (#1-6) is correct or otherwise?1. The call focuses on storage of the majority DNLEU material (U3O8 and UO3), not the miscellaneous DNLEU material
2. The majority DNLEU material will likely be stored on its own/’as is’ in a stainless steel transport container meaning that
3. The phosphate cement that is the focus of the call scope is thus intended to be used as backfill material (in either higher strength or lower strength host rock), not as a cementitious grout in the containers
4. This phosphate cement would thus be an ‘exotic’ alternative to NRVB, clay backfill, etc.
5. In general the strength of the backfill should not be high, its permeability should be low, and its chemical affinity for the radionuclides (in this case U and daughters) should be high

And/or:1. Does the call additionally focus on the small amount of miscellaneous DNLEU material? My reading is that this material may indeed require a cementitious grout.

I suppose that the optimal type of phosphate cement may change depending on whether it is used as a cement grout or as a backfill material. So I just wanted to clarify these points with you. | Regarding your questions, I would like to clarify this project is focused on the Backfill only (as you said alternative NRVB for DNLEU area). Waste management and waste packagers are responsible for grouting some of the miscellaneous DNLEU and RWM is focused to build a GDF. Focusing on the backfill only and also I wanted to mention that RWM has a priority to focus on Low Strength Sedimentary Rocks (LSSR) but we still need to consider High strength rocks and evaporites. These are some information you might find useful:There are some characteristics of the backfill that will apply regardless of the rock type. For example, to enable emplacement the backfill will have to be very fluid to ensure that the gaps between and around the waste packages are filled without the aid of mechanical vibration. In addition, when in place, the backfill should be sufficiently cohesive to prevent excessive bleed and settlement, again to minimize voidage in the local backfill | 03/05/21 23:25 | 04/05/21 12:51 |
| Q4 | I wanted to know whether there are any costs that would not be permissible under this call? For example, the studentship will require analytics as part of the research which will incur cost, as well as technician time to support work carried out within the facility. I assume these are all permissible costs as they are required to meet the deliverables of the research? | Just to confirm that all reasonable costs required to meet the deliverables of the research are permissible and the types of costs you mention are acceptable, noting that each project proposal is expected to cost less than £120,000 and RWM is seeking co-funding/in-kind contributions where possible. | 28/04/21 12:44 | 28/04/2115:50 |
| Q4a | Are indirect costs and directly allocated costs such as supervisor time permissible on the proposal?  | Yes I can confirm DA costs are eligible.  | 04/05/21 22:10 | 05/05/21 09:56 |
| Q4b | Just to confirm, DA costs including estates and indirect are permissible? | Yes they are. There is space for DA costs within the application form. | 05/05/21 09:58 | 05/05/2110:28 |
| Q5, Q6, Q7,Q8,Q9, |  | To follow | 14/05/21 12:32 |  |
| Q10 | **Right to publish the Agreement (clause 11.6) –** for what purpose does RWM require the right to publish the Agreement in its entirety?; | Compliance with PSR 2015 as RWM is a public sector organisation and if required RWM must publish all the agreements on the public contracts website | 14/05/21 12:32 | 14/05/21 16:50 |
| Q11 |  | To follow | 14/05/21 12:32 |  |
| Q12 | **Termination (clause 18.1)** – RWM should not have a right to terminate the Agreement for any reason. Such a termination clause is highly unusual for an agreement of this type which is intended to cover a studentship. | RWM must have this clauses as RWM are funding by the Government and if they cut the funding then RWM cannot pay the money to the universities (if the Government states that no more grants need to be paid, RWM will have to stop that). We are fully funded by the Government and not a commercial organisation | 14/05/21 12:32 | 14/05/21 16:50 |
| Q13 | **Security Requirements (schedule 3)** – We understand this Schedule is present in some RWM contracts, but not others. On discussion with our IT Security team, we feel the level of cyber security provision expected is abnormally high for a PhD project delivering fundamental understanding. In particular, the requirement under schedule 3 clause 3.5 that all IT systems used require routine penetration testing performed by a credible external security consultant would require significant  change in the standard data Cyber Essentials Compliant management practices we routinely use for PhD studentships. This is deliverable for projects with elevated security classification, but we do not understand the requirement in this case. Given the significant change to normal working practices the PhD student would have to undergo to meet these requirements, we feel the need for this level of security has to be questioned. | To follow | 14/05/21 12:32 |  |
| Q14 | **Additional Sources of Funding** – should be mentioned within the Agreement and the terms and conditions of this Agreement (e.g. in relation to IP, publications etc.) will need to be consistent with any terms and conditions of any other sources of funding so there must be a certain level of flexibility within the Agreement to account for this as previously acknowledged by RWM within RWM’s comments when a draft Agreement is initially issued by RWM to a party for review. | Noted. RWM will consider the IP in relation to joint funding with other funding bodies (not universities applying for the funding) if the universities are obtaining additional funding for the proposed project. However, if the funding is only provided by RWM, the IP clauses stand. | 14/05/21 12:32 | 14/05/21 16:50 |