



## Request for Quotes: Market Survey and Analysis of the Irrigation Services Sector in Kent

### 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this work is to assist Kent County Council (KCC) in understanding the economic opportunities and barriers for the irrigation and farm water management sector in Kent. The work responds to keen interest from local farmers and growers in irrigation and water management technology and practices and it supports KCC work on food security and water resilience.

Earlier work has identified that water availability for irrigation is a significant long term risk for Kent<sup>1</sup> that will impact on the economy and future food security. The Kent Rural Board has set up a Task Group to address this issue. Key objectives set by that group are to 'optimise food output per unit of water' and enable 'secure and resilient water supplies' for the industry. In achieving these objectives there may be significant opportunities for local businesses in the irrigation and water management sector.

The funding for this work is being provided through FUSION which is an EU Interreg IVA 2 Seas Programme Project and part funded by the European Regional Development Fund. The FUSION Project aims to increase economic growth in the 2 Seas region while reducing the environmental impact by promoting an eco-innovative mindset in SMEs from start-up to high growth. Kent is the lead partner for the project and has a particular interest in supporting the development of new sustainable business models in Kent and the expansion of the low carbon, environmental technologies sector through developing effective strategies and policies and targeted business support packages. This work will assist the County Council in delivering this aim.

### 2.0 Background

Irrigated agriculture employs more than 50,000 people in the UK, it contributes significantly to the rural economy and supports the UK food security. With one of the highest concentrations of horticultural production in the country, irrigation is particularly important for the Kent rural economy. However, Kent is also one of the driest counties in the UK and, with a relatively high density of population, Kent water supplies are under increasing pressure.

The agricultural and horticultural sector relies heavily on licensed abstractions from rivers and aquifers for its irrigation water. Most of the Kent river catchments are classified by the Environment Agency as 'over abstracted' or 'over licensed', and in most years summer abstractions are either not permitted or are severely restricted. As a result, a lack of available water for irrigation already poses a significant threat to Kent food production. In an online survey of water usage amongst Kent

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<sup>1</sup> <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/environment-and-planning/environment-and-climate-change/water%20summit/WRF%20Analysis%20of%20Risks%20and%20Opportunities.pdf>

members of LEAF UK conducted for KCC in 2012, approximately 50% of the growers interviewed indicated that water shortages had negatively impacted their business during the last five years. The same study also highlighted that climate change is expected to significantly increase crop water demand and summer river flows are expected to dramatically reduce but mean winter river flows may increase. It found that some of these changes have already taken place and that many Kent growers are responding by planning new water storage reservoirs.

A separate piece of work with partner organisations is further investigating farm water management practices in the SE and has already identified a keen interest in improved irrigation technology and practices. Once completed, it is intended to bring irrigators together with the equipment and service providers within an event focussed on enhanced water use efficiency.

### **3.0 Objectives**

The aim of this work is to develop a clear understanding of the potential opportunities for the irrigation and water management business sector and any barriers to the realisation of these opportunities. Whilst the primary focus is on Kent, it is recognised that many of the businesses concerned are currently based elsewhere.

To achieve this KCC requires a survey of businesses within the sector to identify and report on:

- The economic scale, characteristics and trends within the sector that serves Kent, paying specific attention to local businesses and providing a breakdown of business types.
- UK companies that have a particular interest in the Kent market and might be interested to exhibit at local events.
- The future local economic opportunities, potential barriers, and any information, advice and support requirements needed to support growth within the sector in Kent.
- Characteristics of the supply chain and any opportunities this might present for Kent companies; including an assessment of these organisations awareness to circular economy i.e. cradle to cradle models; business resilience and the like.

It is anticipated that the survey would involve some combination of person-to-person and telephone / email interviews.

#### **3.1 Business sectors of interest**

The businesses that are of interest within this work include:

- Manufacturers, suppliers and distributors of irrigation equipment (in particular equipment that has the potential to help improve water use efficiency);
- Design engineers, construction contractors and equipment providers for farm reservoirs and associated pipelines and pumping systems;
- Manufacturers and suppliers of agricultural rainwater harvesting systems and similar alternative supply solutions;
- Manufacturers and suppliers of soil moisture and crop monitoring systems, irrigation scheduling and control systems and services;

- Businesses providing irrigation and water management consultancy;
- Businesses providing relevant surveying services, advice and support with planning applications, and similar services.

#### **4.0 Outputs**

- Draft survey questionnaire
- Tested, final survey questionnaire
- Categorised database of businesses (location and business type)
- A target of 25 completed questionnaires across a range of businesses categories
- Database of survey results
- Summary tables and charts of findings
- Project report including an Executive Summary
- Set of PowerPoint slides and speaker notes summarising the work and the key findings

#### **5.0 Value of work**

We invite quotes for this work; however it is important to note that value for money will be a key criterion for assessment. A payment of one third of the fee will be made upon entering into a contract to provide the study, with the remainder payable upon completion.

#### **6.0 Client**

The Client for this work is Kent County Council (KCC)

#### **7.0 Contract Terms and Conditions**

The successful contractor will be bound by the Council's standard terms and conditions. These are available on request.

#### **8.0 Timetable**

The following timetable applies:

Invitation to quote:	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2014
Closing date for receipt of quotes:	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2014
Selection of contractor:	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2014
Inception meeting:	W/c 7 <sup>th</sup> April 2014
Identification of businesses, survey design and implementation:	April to June 2014
Data analysis and reporting:	June-July 2014
Draft report:	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2014
Comments from Client:	15 <sup>th</sup> of August 2014
Final report:	29 <sup>th</sup> of August 2014
Final payment:	15 <sup>th</sup> of September 2014

## 9.0 Quotation requirements

Quotes for this work will include:

- a) Brief work plan on how the work will be done in accordance with the objectives and the timetable;
- b) Details and examples, no more than three, of previous projects that can demonstrate:
  - In-depth understanding of the irrigation and water management sector;
  - Excellent knowledge of relevant UK and Kent business and/or sources of information on this;
  - A track record in designing and conducting questionnaire surveys and analysis and interpretation of results;
  - Excellent report writing skills.
- c) Demonstrable evidence of project team experience; a maximum of two pages.
- d) A breakdown of costs including day rates of project team (costs excluding VAT)

## 10.0 Evaluation criteria

We will evaluate the quotation according to:

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
Quality of the work plan	25%
Expertise and experience	20%
Capacity and capability	15%
Value for money	30%
Compliance with timescales	10%

## 11.0 Submission and contact

Please submit quotes electronically, MS Word or PDF, by 5pm on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 to [alan.turner@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alan.turner@kent.gov.uk).

The lead contact for this work will be:

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**Dated: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014**