SCOTLAND FOOD & DRINK

20 February 2026

INVITATION TO TENDER

You are hereby invited by Scotland Food & Drink (SF&D) to quote for a "call off contract" for the provision of communications services for Scotland Food & Drink

QUOTE Reference: SFD_COMMUNICATIONS26

First stage - Note of Interest

Scotland Food & Drink wishes to appoint a single Provider for the tender of communications services for the organisation, as well as The Knowledge Bank, the Scotland Food & Drink Partnership's Net Zero Commitment and the Organic Action Plan.

You are invited to send a note of interest for this tender to be received by 12 noon on Wednesday, 4 March. This should include a summary of your agency's experience in relation to Scotland's food and drink sector, including data and insight-led activity, and Net Zero-related activity. This should be no more than 800 words and be sent to: Janice.macgregor@foodanddrink.scot

Those asked for the second stage will be notified by 17.00 on Monday, 9 March.

Second Stage - Call Off Procedure

Scotland Food & Drink wishes to appoint a single Provider for this tender, beginning from 1 April 2026, with specific individual commissions being developed and refined at the point of call off. The successful Provider will be the highest ranked bid identified in the evaluation.

Once the Provider is appointed, the call off process will operate.

The Provider must be able to carry out the work within the timescales agreed at contract award or as demand requires.

In the event of a capacity constraint, conflict of interest or inability to respond to lead time, commissions may not be awarded to the appointed Provider.

Your response must be in accordance with this ITT and include the details and information as specified in the document including your price summary.

SF&D is not bound to accept the lowest price of any quote and shall not be bound to accept the supplier as a sole supplier. Prices quoted shall remain firm for the duration of the contract. Value Added Tax (VAT) should be shown separately.

It is your responsibility to obtain, at your own expense, any additional information necessary for the preparation of your response, and you will be responsible for any expenses incurred by you during the tendering process.

If your response does not accord with all the requirements of this ITT, it may not be considered.

Presentations will take place on 16 & 17 March at Scotland Food & Drink's Edinburgh office. Please make provision for these dates.

Enquiries should be emailed to janice.macgregor@foodanddrink.scot noting the Quote Reference in the subject line.

Scotland Food & Drink

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PART 1 – OVERVIEW

Introduction - About Scotland Food & Drink

Scotland Food & Drink empowers Scotland's food and drink businesses to achieve their full potential, to drive our economy, sustain our environment and support our communities.

For more than 15 years it has represented the industry and its more than 400 member businesses, bringing industry, government, and government agencies together.

Scotland Food & Drink's vision is for Scotland to be the best place in the world to own, operate, and work for a food and drink business – to be renowned as a world leader in sustainable production and responsible growth, where resilient businesses across the entire supply chain can flourish and prosper.

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Background

Scotland Food & Drink seeks to appoint a lead provider to support our communications activity from 1 April 2026. This opportunity is for a call off agreement. It is anticipated that the contract will commence with a period of one year, reviewed on an annual basis, up to three years.

Budget

The total budget for this tender is £50,000 per annum.

PART 2 – SPECIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS

Objective

SF&D is looking for a lead provider for the delivery of communications support including PR, media relations and thought leadership to build the reputation of Scotland Food & Drink and the sector as a whole. The work will also include communications support for The Knowledge Bank, the Scotland Food & Drink Partnership's Net Zero Commitment and some additional projects.

Target audience

The communications support should target the following audiences:

- Scottish food and drink businesses of all sizes, sectors and locations both members and non-members.
- Scottish Government's policy teams across food, drink, agriculture, health and trade.
- UK Government core departments – Defra, DTI
- Food and drink buyers – retail (both Scottish and UK), convenience, foodservice, wholesale, and independent.
- The Scotland Food & Drink Partnership members and other related bodies.
- Other businesses who have an interest in the sector e.g. professional services, investment companies, hospitality.

Expected results

- Strong and trusted relationships with food and drink, business and trade media contacts.
- Scotland Food & Drink is the first port of call for trade, B2B and Scottish media for food and drink industry information.
- Profile building for SF&D's CEO and senior leadership team.

- Improved awareness across B2B and key stakeholders of Scottish Food & Drink September and other key campaigns.
- Profile building and thought leadership for The Knowledge Bank and the Scotland Food & Drink Partnership's Net Zero Commitment using insights and research to support op-eds and thought leadership activity.

Expected capabilities

- Demonstrate relevant expertise, knowledge and solid experience in communications support for similar organisations.
- Have an excellent understanding and experience of working with food and drink companies, data/insight organisations and Net Zero-related organisations.
- Have a sound grasp of the challenges and opportunities facing our sector driven by skills, climate change, and export challenges.
- Demonstrate strong knowledge and relationships across the business, food and drink and trade titles, both in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

PART 3 – TENDER STRUCTURE

Agencies invited to tender following the note of interest stage should structure their response as detailed below. Responses will be scored using the weighting detailed in the tender evaluation.

1. **Submission**
   A single tender submission is required. Your submission should be clearly marked with the name of your organisation and emailed to Scotland Food & Drink as detailed in this ITT.

2. **Company information**
   Please provide the following information:
   - Registered company name, number and office address
   - Description of main services provided

3. **Agency team**
   The relationship we have with our agency is crucial to a successful outcome. Trust is key. We need to know you are part of our team. Please show how you will make this happen. Provide a diagram showing the delivery team structure, including their roles and responsibilities, and provide a brief CV showing their experience, expertise and qualifications to deliver the contract. Who will be the day-to-day contact and what

experience do they have? How will they be supported by the wider agency?

Please provide details of how the team will work with SF&D including reporting procedures on resource and KPIs.

4. **Understanding of requirements**
   - Demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements to deliver a credible communications programme for Scotland Food & Drink, including a 24/7 press office when required, a proactive approach to building awareness of our activities, and identifying the opportunities for SF&D to raise its profile both in Scotland and the rest of the UK.
   - The ability to support strategically as well as on campaigns and project delivery stages.

5. **Outputs and evaluation**
   We are looking for clear continuous learning and evaluation and full transparency on resource from the agency team. Please provide your approach to this.

6. **Innovation/approach**
   Detail any innovative suggestions in your methodology. SF&D welcomes innovative ideas and suggestions to improve our approach to communications and media relations. Detail how you would contribute to our communications planning to support your proposal.

7. **Capacity**
   Detail how you will deploy resources to meet demand including during periods of absence.

8. **Interviews**
   All agencies taken forward may be asked to attend a presentation stage to give a short presentation lasting no more than 30 minutes which will be assessed by an Evaluation Panel. Your presentation will be based upon the work being tendered through this process, followed by a Q&A session. Please makes sure the people who will be servicing the account deliver the presentation.
   Presentations will take place on 16 & 17 March at SF&D's offices in Ratho, Edinburgh – you will be notified of this by Monday, 9 March.

The expected timeline and key milestones for the procurement/initiation are as follows:

Tender out for first stage note of interest	23 February
Tender close	4 March
Second stage interviews if required	16 & 17 March
Contractor appointed	20 March

It should be noted that the above dates are viewed by Scotland Food & Drink as in principle.

Fees and Costs

Tenderers must provide a monthly free proposal (excl. VAT), inclusive of billable hours, to cover the core contract activity and include basic travel costs for in-person meetings when required.

All other services outside of agency costs will be provided as required by SF&D.

Contract Management

All tender submissions must show how outputs will be profiled for delivery throughout the duration of the contract and how they will be accurately managed and, where necessary, reported on.

PART 4 - TENDER EVALUATION

Tender Evaluation Criteria

Price & Quality

All submissions will be scored on both price and quality. The contract will be awarded to the Provider who receives the highest total score. The overall price: quality split for this tender will be 40:60 respectively.

Any mandatory requirements or thresholds identified in the brief must be met before the submission will be evaluated further. You must address each of the evaluation criteria in your submission in order to receive a score.

Please note that submissions will not be considered further if the above requirements are not met.

Price Criteria	**Weighting %**
Total tender cost (excl. VAT)	30%
Added value	10%
Total	**40%**

Quality Criteria	**Weighting %**
Demonstrable track record and experience of delivering communications support including two previous examples of recent work.	30%

General understanding of the brief and capacity to deliver services as outlined in the specification of requirements, agency commitment to the sector, reducing environmental impact, and creating positive working environment.	10%
Experience and expertise of the proposed team.	20%
Total	**60%**

Each of the criteria will be scored using the scale below:

0 – Unacceptable – Nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet requirement.

1 – Poor – Partially relevant but generally poor response. Demonstrates some understanding of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be met.

2 –Acceptable – Relevant and acceptable response. Demonstrates a broad understanding of the requirement but lacks detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be met in certain areas.

3 – Good – Relevant and good response. Sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding of the requirement and provides an explanation of how the requirement will be met.

4 – Excellent – Completely relevant and excellent overall response. Comprehensive and clear and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides a concise and persuasive explanation of how the requirement will be met in full.

It should be noted that we have not specified any word restrictions. Integral within your assessment will be your demonstrated ability to answer the questions in an open clear and concise manner.

Scotland Food & Drink may undertake, if deemed appropriate, additional meetings with tenderer(s) to clarify / verify their tender submissions.

PART 5 - PRICE SUMMARY

Price

Prices shall be deemed inclusive of all additional expenses howsoever incurred. Whilst it is not a criterion for selection of Providers, SF&D encourages additional expenses not to exceed 10% of the total contract value.

Providers are encouraged to pay the Living Wage to their employees and to promote payment of the Living Wage throughout their supply chain.

PART 6 – TERMS & CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

Provided on appointment