

24 September 2025

Dear

ATISN 25178 Squirreelpox vaccine feasibility study

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 23rd September 2025. You asked for:

1. The terms set defining the specific scope and required outputs of the feasibility study.
2. Where and when the invitation to tender for the work was advertised.
3. Who was awarded the contract.
4. What is the deadline for contract delivery.

Our response

1. The terms set defining the specific scope and required outputs of the feasibility study.
 - A. Objectives:
 - To explore available evidence and provide recommendations to inform policy decisions with regards to the realistic prospect of the research into a squirreelpox vaccine, taking into account costs, resource, pharmaceutical market climate,
 - To understand the available evidence on the most appropriate form of a vaccine (i.e. injectable or oral), to tackle squirrel pox,
 - To understand the views and appetite of the pharmaceutical industry on the manufacture and sale of a squirreelpox vaccine,
 - To set out the estimated time necessary for marketing authorisation if a vaccine (oral/injectable) were to be produced, considering research, laboratory and field trials, preparation of the dossiers, and VMD authorisation process,
 - Estimated costs and resource for the ongoing deployment of a vaccine to the wild red squirrel population,
 - To identify the risks and benefits of a vaccine programme to support the increase in the population of red squirrels.
 - B. Requirements:

The Welsh Government is seeking a contractor who has good working knowledge of wildlife health and protection and will be required to:

 - Explore options with regards to the route of administration of the potential vaccine to the wild red squirrel population in Wales, for example, an injectable or an oral vaccine. This will require a review of wildlife vaccine deployment strategies in the UK and or in the world/Europe.
 - Liaise with pharmaceutical industry, Veterinary Medicines Directorate, scientists, ecologists, species experts, economists, statisticians, and other

parties as necessary, to formulate independent and unbiased opinion and recommendations.

- Carry out a brief literature review relevant to the nature of the feasibility study.
- Analyse the existing evidence/research on the technical, economic, financial and environmental aspects of a squirrelpox vaccine,
- Provide detail about the realistic timeline and costs, from research to marketing authorisation and deployment.

C. Deliverables:

- Final report (in both English and Welsh) which will be published on the Welsh Government website.
- A succinct report summarising the findings and conclusions for internal purposes only.

2. The invitation to tender was sent on 1st July directly to external suppliers on Sell2Wales list, in accordance with Welsh Government's Natural Resources Dynamic Purchasing System.
3. Not held - no bids were submitted so the contract has not been awarded.
4. Not held - given the above answer, there is no contract in place, hence there is no deadline.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at: Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely