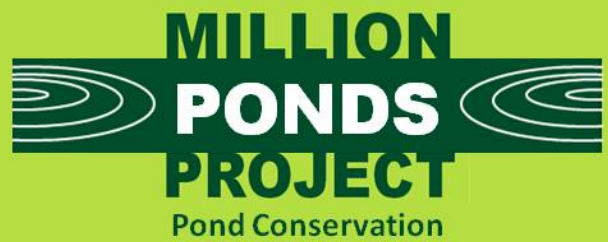


Putting a price on your pond creation project and working with contractors



A 50-YEAR PROJECT TO CREATE A NETWORK OF CLEAN WATER PONDS FOR FRESHWATER WILDLIFE

1. Get the maximum number of ponds for your pounds!

An important part of managing any project is keeping the costs under control. If you've never been involved with a pond creation project before, the information below can help you with some of these practicalities. See also the *Pond Creation Toolkit Factsheet Sheets 6 and 7* that provide further information.

A successful pond creation project depends on working effectively with contractors and obtaining a good price for the job. To find the best price for your job:

- Before asking for a quote, be clear in your own mind about what you'll be asking the contractor to do. Think carefully about exactly how you're going to tackle a job and prepare a clear specification for the work (See *Pond Creation Toolkit Factsheet 6, Section 4: Planning the Construction Phase*).
- Always get at least two quotes (preferably three) unless you're absolutely sure that you've found the best contractor for the best price.
- Think about whether pond creation work could be linked in with other jobs to save on costs, for example, ditching or footpath work.
- Ask some follow up questions to confirm contractors prices. Make sure you know exactly what's been included within an estimate, for example is the cost of fuel included?

2. Who should I ask for a quote?

- Always ask around to try and find the most appropriate contractor for the job – word of mouth is the best form of recommendation. Note that local contractors are not necessarily the cheapest, and the cheapest contractor is not necessarily the best!
- Agricultural contractors are well worth contacting as they are often experience in pond construction. Many agricultural contractors work all over the country, so if you're in an urban area don't assume that they won't be interested in quoting for your job. N.B. Some agricultural contractors are able to transport their excavator using a tractor and trailer. This can be done for a fraction of the cost of hiring a low loader and allows the excavator to be delivered much closer to where it is required.

3. Should I ask a contractor to work for a fixed price or on a daily rate basis?

Working on a daily rate basis gives more flexibility to adapt your plans as the ponds develop. For example if a site looks like it may not hold water you can ask the machine driver to move elsewhere without the complication of having to negotiate another price. If you ask a contractor to work on a daily rate basis, confirm how much work constitutes "a day" and ensure you're on site to supervise the work.

However, it may be better to negotiate a fixed price for some pond creation schemes. This is particularly the case for larger schemes – which tend to have more uncertainties associated with them, and if you don't have time to be

What's in this factsheet?

- Get the most for your money
- Who to ask for a quote
- Fixed price or daily rate?
- How long does it take to create a pond?
- Providing a brief for a contractor
- What a quote should include
- What sort of price?

on site during the excavations. If you are unsure about the experience of the contractor, then a fixed price may also be more appropriate.

4. How long does it take to create a pond?

Of course this varies as it depends on many things such as the size and depth of the finished pond. However if all goes well and as long as the spoil can be spread adjacent to the pond it shouldn't take more than 2-3 hours to create a water body which is 10x10m and 90cm deep at its deepest point. It should be possible to create at least two such ponds in a day if the digging is straightforward and the ponds are fairly close together. Bear in mind that it can take as long to spread the spoil as it does to excavate it, so consider this carefully when estimating the cost of a project. The further the spoil has to be taken, the more the cost will be.

5. Providing a brief for a contractor

When asking for a quote for work, your brief should include:

- **A plan showing the pond location and where the spoil will be spread.** Confirm the maximum height and maximum gradient of mounds created. See *Pond Creation Toolkit Factsheet 6, Section 4* on dealing with spoil. Depending on the scale and complexity of your scheme, it can be useful to arrange a **site visit** and discuss the pond creation scheme with the contractor on site.
- **Specifications for each pond.** Ideally provide a plan showing the pond outline and contours, and the level of finish required – this may not be necessary for smaller pond creation schemes. See *Pond Creation Toolkit Factsheet 4* for information on pond design for biodiversity.
- **The machines you need to use, i.e. digger and dumper.** Most contractors are happy to advise on this, but a 13 ton excavator is a good choice for most jobs. See *Pond Creation Toolkit Factsheet 7* for further advice on the choice of machinery.
- **Where the machine will be delivered, what route must be used to move around the site** and which areas should be avoided. Make it clear which areas are out of bounds, for example ecologically sensitive areas, amenity grassland areas or any other features you want to protect from damage.
- **Your involvement in terms of on site preparation and supervision**, e.g. marking the ponds on the ground.

N.B. Be prepared to take the advice of experienced contractors and to modify your brief/plan accordingly. You may also want to show the *Pond Creation Toolkit Factsheets 1-8* to the contractor.

6. What the quote should include

The contractor should be able to provide you with the following information as part of his quote:

- **Costings**, including an estimate of total cost and how long the work will take, and a breakdown of costs including transport of machinery to and from the depot, dumper and digger hire, the number and cost of driver(s) etc.
- **If working on a daily basis rate**, the daily and hourly rate for the machine and its driver. Confirm when the day starts and finishes. If you're paying for an 8 hour day this should cover the time from when the machine starts up until it's closed down for the night.
- **Provisional items.** Sometimes it's impossible to predict everything that a contractor will need to do on the day and sometimes you may need to ask for work not included in your original brief. To be prepared for this, ask the contractor for their hourly and daily rates, then if you need to ask them to do any extra work everyone knows what the charges will be.
- Make sure **VAT** is including in your cost estimate!



7. What sort of price should I expect to pay?

A variety of local factors will affect the cost of your pond creation project such as:

- Access restrictions that limit the size of machinery.
- The distance that spoil needs to be moved before being spread. The costs of taking spoil off site, e.g. floodplain sites, are very high and you will need permission from the Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk.
- Whether machinery can be left safely on site overnight, or whether it will need to be moved at the end of each day.
- General traffic conditions around the site – working in urban or very rural areas can make a big difference to costs.

Note that costs are different in different parts of the country!

As a general indication costs are:

- The cost of hiring a 13 ton excavator with driver is fairly consistent and is approximately £250-£350/day (+VAT).
- The cost of hiring a dumper and driver is approximately £150-£250/day (+VAT).
- The cost of transporting machinery to and from a site can be very variable and you'll need to confirm this cost separately for each job. Costs often vary between £50 and £200 each way (+VAT), depending on distance.

For further information about the Million Ponds Project and to consult other factsheets in the Pond Creation Toolkit, please visit www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds or email enquiries to info@pondconservation.org.uk

