REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
EVALUATION OF HURRICANE SANDY COASTAL RESILIENCY PROGRAM

January 8, 2016


1. OVERVIEW
The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified contractor to analyze and evaluate the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Program (the contemplated contract). The successful offeror will be selected through a two stage competitive process. Stage One, Request for Qualifications (RFQ), invites qualified individuals or entities to submit Statements of Qualifications for an assessment of their organizational structure, staffing, understanding of the scope of work, and relevant experience. Stage Two, Request for Proposals (RFP), will be open only to those offerors who have responded to the RFQ, and on the basis of their submissions, NFWF regards as being qualified for further consideration and to be invited to submit more detailed information as part of the RFP process. Only one award will be made for this contract. This notice constitutes Stage One, Request for Qualifications. The contract period of performance is targeted for May 1, 2016 – April 30, 2018. NFWF also welcomes offerors to submit information or comment on the type of contract (i.e., firm-fixed price, cost reimbursable, time and materials, etc.) that should be considered and described by NFWF in the Stage 2 RFP process.

2. PROGRAM BACKGROUND
In 2013, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 (Sandy Supplemental) appropriated $829.2 million ($786.7 million after sequestration) for the Department of Interior (DOI) to rebuild and repair coastal assets and make strategic investments in future coastal resilience. With these funds, DOI provided $204 million to support 113 DOI Bureau projects designed to reduce ecosystem and community vulnerability to the growing risks from climate-related threats (including coastal storms, sea level rise, flooding, and erosion) by strengthening natural ecosystems in the region affected by Hurricane Sandy. These projects also included investments in scientific data and studies to inform recovery in the region, as well as historic preservation efforts.

In addition, DOI partnered with NFWF to administer an external funding competition to support similar projects led by state and local governments, universities, non-profits, community groups, tribes, and other non-Federal entities. Through this process, $100 million in DOI funding from the Sandy Supplemental was invested in 54 projects along with more than $2.7 million in private funding leveraged by NFWF. Projects funded through this external competition were also designed to reduce communities’ vulnerability to the growing risks from climate-related threats by strengthening natural ecosystems in areas that were declared a natural disaster as a result of Hurricane Sandy (Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia).

DOI, NFWF, and their partners conducted strategic planning exercises to refine the mission, goals and funding priorities of this competitive external funding program. The three overarching goals of the program are to:
1. Reduce the impacts of coastal storm surge, wave velocity, sea-level rise, and associated natural threats on coastal and inland communities.
2. Strengthen the ecological integrity and functionality of coastal/inland ecosystems to protect communities and to enhance fish and wildlife and their associated habitats.
3. Enhance our understanding of the impacts of storm events and identify cost-effective resilience tools that help mitigate the effects of future storms, sea level rise, and other phenomena related to climate change.

DOI, in collaboration with others, has identified ecological and socio-economic metrics needed to measure the effects of the combined 167 DOI and NFWF projects in enhancing resilience of engineered and ecological coastal systems. The intent of the contemplated contract is to analyze these metrics and evaluate the program's progress towards meeting resilience goals at multiple spatial and temporal scales.

For more background information, visit the DOI Hurricane Sandy website at [https://www.doi.gov/hurricanesandy](https://www.doi.gov/hurricanesandy)

NFWF and DOI will provide the selected contractor with the following information and support:

- Records of grant awards and grantee information;
- Grant-award project reports;
- Hurricane Sandy Program technical reports, including:
  - Developing Socio-Economic Metrics to Measure DOI Hurricane Sandy Project and Program Outcomes, prepared for NFWF by Abt Associates. (Forthcoming and will be posted at [http://www.nfwf.org/hurricanesandy/](http://www.nfwf.org/hurricanesandy/));
- Other relevant Hurricane Sandy Program products as requested (e.g., logic model, project selection criteria, etc.);
- Assistance facilitating collaboration with individual project lead investigators.

### 3. CONTRACT SCOPE

The purpose of the contemplated contract is to determine the ecological and community benefits (primary and co-benefits) associated with resilience investments made with Hurricane Sandy funding. NFWF expects the selected contractor to answer the questions outlined below. The selected contractor will be tasked to refine and finalize the evaluation questions, with the consensus of NFWF and DOI partners.

**Project Implementation and Outcomes:**

1. **Implementation Progress:** To what extent were projects able to implement resilience activities (e.g., habitat restoration, green infrastructure improvements) as proposed and at the quality expected?
2. **Outcome Achievement:** To what extent did projects achieve their proposed objectives? What factors facilitated or hindered project success?
Resilience Impacts:

Resilience impacts may be assessed at the project scale, at the community scale, and/or coastal-wide across the impact area, as appropriate.

3. **Ecological Impacts**: What fish, wildlife and other ecological/environmental outcomes have been observed in the project area? To what extent are they believed to be a result of Hurricane Sandy project activities, either individually and/or collectively? If more time is needed to observe the anticipated benefits, do the mitigation or restoration outcomes match the modeled projections for resilience improvements?

4. **Social Impacts**: To what extent did projects individually and/or collectively reduce estimated storm risk to coastal and inland communities and/or fish and wildlife and their habitats? To what extent did projects individually and/or collectively mitigate actual storm damage?
   a. Which resilience activities (e.g., dune restoration, living shorelines, vulnerability assessments, early warning systems) are least and most associated with reduction in estimated storm risk or mitigating actual storm damage (actual or modeled outcomes)?
   b. What is the expected lag time between implementation of resilience activities and the realization of resilience benefits?
   c. To what extent did projects deliver secondary socio-economic benefits (e.g., recreation, increased home values), and how might those benefits change over time with climate change?
   d. In communities with projects, to what extent have or are communities taking additional action to reduce risk and increase resilience, such as implementing nonstructural measures (e.g., zoning)? What factors facilitated or hindered communities’ adoption of these additional resilience practices?

5. **Cost-effectiveness**: What is the relative cost-effectiveness of resilience activities (e.g., dune restoration, living shorelines, vulnerability assessments, early warning systems) for achieving ecological and social outcomes?
   a. In the long-term, how cost-effective are projects’ green infrastructure approaches in achieving resilience outcomes when compared to gray infrastructure approaches?
   b. Under what conditions/context are resilience activities most cost-effective?
   c. Which practices will provide the most cost-effective resilience for extending beyond the project footprint to the rest of the coast?

Improved Understanding:

6. Did/will the knowledge gained from the project support improved decisions on implementing resilience strategies, and thus more cost-effective management of the coast in a changing climate?

7. What lessons have we learned regarding what is needed to achieve the program’s coastal resilience goal?

8. What knowledge gaps would we need to fill to better understand the benefits of project activities and to inform planning and prioritization for green infrastructure implementation or restoration?

4. **ANTICIPATED DELIVERABLES**

The contract deliverables will include:
• Quarterly written and verbal progress reports
• Recommendations for data acquisition and/or enhanced data collection that would improve the quality of the evaluation (due first quarter of performance period)
• Draft report
• Final report
• Five to ten presentations and/or webinars to a variety of audiences
• Up to ten in-depth case studies that may include the following:
  o Characterization of the ecological and socio-economic impact of projects within specific communities
  o Cost-effectiveness of a specific green infrastructure activity compared to a common gray infrastructure activity that addresses the same threat to resilience (e.g., dune loss, wetland loss)
  o The conditions and context that affect the cost-effectiveness of a specific resilience activity.
• Outreach materials to communicate evaluation results to a range of audiences including policy makers, elected officials, restoration professionals. Materials may include but are not limited to: an executive summary, PowerPoint presentations (short and long versions), infographics, standalone documents for each of the case studies with accompanying PowerPoint presentations.

These deliverables may be expanded or refined during Stage 2 of the bid process and/or during the contract negotiation.

5. STAGE ONE CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Statements of Qualifications will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria. Statements should be single-spaced in Word format or a searchable PDF, with a minimum 11 point font, and not to exceed the indicated page or word limits. Offerors should organize their Statement based on these sections:

A. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** A statement of no more than one page demonstrating an understanding of green infrastructure, coastal resilience and the activities involved in the Hurricane Sandy program efforts.

B. **Technical Approach.** A description of no more than five pages of a proposed technical approach for conducting the evaluation, which must demonstrate familiarity and proficiency in using the various research methods and designs determined to be appropriate for conducting the investigation. For instance, this might include a description of methods for collecting and analyzing primary data from databases, reports, interviews, surveys, and/or site visits.

C. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** Resumes and/or Vitae of the principal investigator(s), including any subcontractors, describing relevant professional experience in the following areas: (a) evaluation study design and implementation; (b) experience working with federal, state, and local governmental agencies, national and local NGOs involved with conservation; (c) an understanding of green infrastructure and coastal resilience sufficient to be able to ground truth reported outcomes of a sample of grant projects; (d) experience conducting ecological impact assessments; € experience conducting socio-economic impact assessments; and (f) conducting
and disseminating research involving humans as subjects. There is no page limit associated with this element of the Statement of Qualifications.

D. **Record of Past Performance/References.** The Statement of Qualifications should identify at least three past engagements conducting similar evaluations for NFWF or other organizations, identifying the offeror’s quality of work, timeliness, and cost control. The statement should also include communication experience writing reports, conducting webinars and delivering presentations to different types of audiences. The cumulative statement of past performances should not exceed 5 pages. Attach a copy of a previously conducted evaluation final report, if available. The Statement should include names, postal and email addresses, and telephone numbers of points of contact for the referenced engagements. If the offeror anticipates retaining subcontractors for this task, information should be provided that demonstrates their past performance as well.

E. **Corporate Capability.** The offeror shall provide proof of financial stability in the form of an income statement and balance sheet.

F. **Contract Type (Optional).** The offeror may provide information or comment on the type of contract (i.e., firm-fixed price, cost reimbursable, time and materials, etc.) that NFWF should propose for the contemplated contract. Such information shall not exceed one page.

6. **ELIGIBLE OFFERORS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Eligible offerors are institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and local, state, and Indian tribal governments. Only one award will be made for this project. If multiple institutions are involved, they should be handled through subcontracts.

By submitting a Statement of Qualifications in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it does not currently have any apparent or actual conflict of interest, as described herein. In the event an offeror currently has, will have during the life of the contemplated contract, or becomes aware of an apparent or actual conflict of interest, in the event an award is made, the offeror must notify NFWF in writing in the Statement of Qualifications, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the Statement of Qualifications) of such apparent or actual conflicts of interest, including organizational conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the contractor, the contractor’s employees, or the contractor’s subcontractors in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests, or otherwise. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the offeror, the offeror’s employees, or the offeror’s future subcontractors in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the NFWF Contracting Officer will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the offeror to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies NFWF may result in the proposal not being selected for award.
By submitting a Statement of Qualifications in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it is eligible for award of a contract resulting from this solicitation and that it is not subject to any of the below circumstances:

Has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Was convicted (or had an officer or agent of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Is listed on the General Services Administration’s, government-wide System for Award Management Exclusions (SAM Exclusions), in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 C.F.R Part 180 that implement E.O.s 12549 (3 C.F.R., 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 C.F.R., 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension,” or intends to enter into any subaward, contract or other contract using funds provided by NFWF with any party listed on the SAM Exclusions in accordance with Executive Orders 12549 and 12689. The SAM Exclusions can be found at https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/.

7. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND RFQ/RFP DEADLINES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Jan. 8, 2016 Request for Qualifications (RFQ) released.

Jan. 19, 2016 Deadline for questions about the RFQ to NFWF. Offerors should submit questions regarding this RFQ via email to Candace Leong (candace.leong@nfwf.org). NFWF will post all the questions and responses to all questions so that all offerors have access to them at the same time. In order to provide equitable responses, all questions must be received by NFWF no later than 5:00 PM EDT on Jan. 19, 2016.

Jan. 22, 2016 NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the RFQ and responses on the NFWF Hurricane Sandy website at http://www.nfwf.org/hurricanesandy/

Feb. 5, 2016 Statements of Qualifications must be received electronically as an email attachment by Candace Leong (candace.leong@nfwf.org) by 11:00 PM EDT.

Statements must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF with a font size no smaller than 11 pt.
Feb. 19, 2016  NFWF will notify all RFQ offerors of their status and successful offerors will be issued a Request for Proposal (RFP), with instructions for submission of proposals.

Feb. 26, 2016  Deadline for questions about the RFP to NFWF.

March 4, 2016  NFWF will e-mail the questions submitted regarding the RFP and responses to the offerors.

March 18, 2016  Deadline for submission of proposals

Late March/ Early April 2016  Interviews with selected finalists.

April 15, 2016  Contract award to selected offeror.

May 1, 2016 – April 30, 2018  Contractor’s start and end date.