

Applicant Questions and Answers for the:

Request for Quotations: Contract to Provide Technical Liaison Support in the National Coastal Resilience Fund

7/31/20

Application Process and Contracting Questions

1. The RFQ states that it is seeking “two qualified individuals to serve as independent contractor(s) to NFWF”. However, eligible offerors/applicants include commercial organizations, as well as other state and local entities. Can you provide any clarification regarding whether this solicitation is intending to identify independent consultants versus consulting firms?
 - A. While NFWF anticipates that independent consultants will be best suited to achieve the tasks in this RFQ, eligible offerors are not limited to independent consultants and other offerors may prove to be better suited.
2. I’d just like to clarify that NFWF is seeking an ‘individual’ to provide these liaison services. The solicitation has language in several places that implies you may be seeking organizations or teams. I assume that these references are from stock language that do not directly apply here but I’d wanted to make sure before investing time in an application.
 - A. See response to #1 above.
3. It does not seem that this solicitation would preclude an individual within a firm. However, could a firm be selected as one of the two contractors, and in turn utilize multiple individuals from within that firm to provide the support outlined in the RFQ? In other words, can we respond to this RFQ as a company?
 - A. Commercial organizations are eligible to apply.
4. Is it possible for a colleague and I to submit a joint proposal? We have worked together on related projects during the past few years and have complementary skills and strengths, and together would provide better results together than separately. If so, could this be a joint application or would it be a contractor and subcontractor approach?
 - A. Sub-contracts are appropriate and allowable if multiple institutions are involved in a single application. Since funding for this opportunity comes from federal sources contractors 1) shall abide by all required contracting procedures when subcontracting, including but not limited to those requirements of the [OMB Uniform Guidance](#); (2) shall ensure that all applicable federal, state and local requirements are properly flowed down to the subcontractor.
5. Would NFWF be amenable to filling both positions in a single contract, which would more easily allow for site engagement to be divided geographically or thematically?
 - A. It’s possible that one contract may be awarded that satisfies all needs in the RFQ.

6. Since NFWF is awarding two contracts, can we assume that future possible conflicts of interest can be avoided by recusing ourselves from individual situations where we might be supporting or reviewing an application where our firm has a connection to the NCRF applicant? If our firm is, or may likely be in the future, involved with the preparation grant applications related to the National Coastal Resilience Fund and is, or may, become involved with the development of concepts, design, permitting, outreach, and implementation of related projects, would this be viewed as a conflict for this RFQ?
 - A. Organizations that receive NFWF grant monies or engage with NCRF applications are not categorically excluded from this opportunity. NFWF will provide guidance to the successful offeror(s) to avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest.
7. In order to provide an effective and cost sensitive approach, multiple staff located in various geographies may be proposed. Should all resumes of staff who are proposed be submitted? Or just one principal investigator having 3-5 years' experience?
 - A. Resumes should be provided for any staff proposed to engage in the technical approach.
8. Does NFWF allow sub-contractors listed in the contract proposal to be changed and/or new sub-contractors added based on technical needs of NCRF proposals?
 - A. Yes, subcontractors can be changed with NFWF approval.
9. Would the contractor be supplementing the work of existing NFWF staff that is currently serving in this technical liaison role? Replacing a staff member? Or serving as new additional support to the existing NCRF team?
 - A. The technical liaison role will be serving a new supporting role for the NCRF team.
10. Does NFWF seek a technical liaison with an engineering license to support applicants in restoration design?
 - A. An engineering license is not required for the technical liaison role.
11. Would it be acceptable to include a cover letter (and tabs for the Technical Proposal)?
 - A. Offerors may include a cover letter if they choose.
12. On page 3 of 6 of the RFQ, item "5. Budget" is shown as a section that follows Project Understanding, Technical Approach, Personnel Qualifications, and Contractor's Past Performance. However, it is also shown as "2. Budget" (on page 5 of 6) as a separate volume with its own cover. Can you confirm that NFWF is requesting to see the budget as a separate volume (2) only, and not as Section 5 in the Technical Proposal?
 - A. The two different locations being referred to are representing different lists. Page 3 is a list of "CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS", page 5 is a list of "SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS". Please read information regarding budget under each of those lists with

the appropriate context. Budgets should only be provided in the form of a completed budget spreadsheet using the budget template linked throughout the RFQ.

13. The last page of the RFQ is labeled as "Page 5 of 6"; should there be another page following this?

A. The RFQ PDF contains 5 pages.

14. We are a new startup consultancy; would NFWF accept references for relevant experience of the principals prior to their current role in addition to references for work under our company?

A. Offerors may provide relevant reference work of principals that occurred in roles beyond the current company.

Budget Questions

1. Will an estimated budget range be made available for proposers?

A. Per the RFQ, NFWF anticipates awarding two contracts not to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold.

2. Does NFWF have a maximum margin % (for indirect/overhead costs)?

A. NFWF does not limit indirect cost but proposals will be selected based on cost-effectiveness and efficient use of funds.

3. From an estimated budget / order of magnitude perspective, could you provide clarity on NFWF's expectations around a half-time level of effort? For example, for an organization submitting an application, would half-time level of effort mean that the sum of all hours for all "Staff Positions" listed in the Contractor Budget Template add up to no more than 50% of one person's time? Or 50% of each Staff Position's time listed?

A. NFWF anticipates that all individuals proposed on the contractor team will add up to no more than 50% of one person's time.

4. What sorts of documentation will NFWF accept as evidence of an applicant's financial stability?

A. To confirm financial stability, offerors may submit financial statements or a letter from the offeror's financial institution declaring line of credit amount or available cash-on-hand to complete cost-reimbursable contract.

Scope of Work Questions

1. Since this is a national contract, is there any consideration of splitting the work up by region (e.g., West Coast, East Coast, Great Lakes, Gulf Region)? Each region has its own unique needs,

limitations, and required specialized expertise. I suspect certain firms may be strong in one region and relatively weak in another.

- A. Per the RFQ, the NCRF is national, and a contractor should be prepared to provide support to practitioners throughout the program footprint working on a variety of natural and nature-based features; **however**, offerors should highlight if they have a particular expertise in a certain region of the larger NCRF footprint or particular natural or nature-based feature.
2. Does NFWF have a pre-determined assessment of “targeted geographies” (identified in Task 2)? If so, where are they? Within the Program Footprint, are there any geographic areas that are anticipated to be areas of focus over the life of the contract? If so, is there a prioritization list, schedule or process for making these determinations?
 - A. The NCRF is a national program focused on enhancement of resilience for coastal communities, but projects are funded based on consideration of regional circumstances, needs, and priorities. NFWF has not identified regional or geographic priorities for the NCRF or for this RFQ, rather we want to ensure the NCRF supports high quality projects that address communities’ needs. Offerors should indicate any specialized knowledge they possess regarding particular geographies and indicate in their technical approach how they see technical assistance targeting the needs in the geography of expertise.
3. Does NFWF have a technical liaison (staff or contractor) for the Emergency Coastal Resilience Fund? Would this contractor have any involvement with the Emergency Coastal Resilience Fund?
 - A. The technical liaison role in this RFQ is unique to the National Coastal Resilience Fund.
4. Does NFWF anticipate a need for on-location project engagement and outreach?
 - A. On-location project engagement and outreach may be needed. NFWF expects this will depend upon many factors, not the least of which include the offeror’s technical approach and the status of local conditions related to COVID-19.
5. Does NFWF have preference for project engagement and outreach to be done by someone local to the project, or done by the primary contractor with travel as needed?
 - A. There is no preference.
6. Would reasonable travel expenses be reimbursable?
 - A. Reasonable travel expenses should be included in the budget and described in the technical approach.
7. Has NFWF identified a ballpark rate/frequency of site visitation that has worked well for grantees in the past? This would help us to estimate a suitable travel budget.
 - A. Offerors should provide their considerations and assumptions on this as part of the technical approach and budget.

8. How many total NFWF current grantees and prospective applicants does NFWF anticipate each individual contractor serving over the course of the one-year initial performance period?
 - A. Offerors should provide their considerations and assumptions on this as part of the technical approach and budget.
9. For both Task 1 (Regional-Scale Collaboration Promotion) and Task 3 (Troubleshoot Grantee Challenges and Help Advance Projects), we have a range of tools and frameworks we could leverage to advance regional peer-to-peer learning and / or project implementation. For purposes of the proposal, we could present an estimated number of deliveries of these tools over the course of the performance period (which could be a function of the total number of grantees served) or we could share a 'per tool' delivery estimate (which could be on an as needed basis as a function of portfolio need). Does NFWF have a preference for how to articulate the frequency of intervention in the proposal?
 - A. Offeror should present the technical approach they believe will be most effective at achieving the tasks of the RFQ.
10. Finally, given ongoing uncertainty around the impacts of COVID-19, has NFWF considered alternatives to site visits and other engagements? We have deployed a range of digital and virtual convening methods over the past five months but I wanted to see if NFWF had guidance or policies for work with its grantees in light of the current pandemic.
 - A. Offerors should include the technical approach alternatives for engagement that consider local circumstances and other potential COVID-19 impacts.
11. Could NFWF provide anticipated future funding levels for the National Coastal Resilience Fund? How many applicants does NFWF anticipate applying for 2021 program funds?
 - A. For the purposes of scoping, offerors may consider historic funding levels under the NCRF (averaging \$30 million per year) and should expect that the total number of pre-proposal applicants to be between 200 and 400.