



Long Island Sound and New England Watershed Investment Plan Development

Contract to Develop Phase 2 of the Investment Plan: Spatial Analysis to Inform Conservation Investments

QUOTATION DEADLINE: August 20, 2021

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified contractor to help refine and enhance spatial analyses in order to focus conservation investments under the Long Island Sound Futures Fund (Futures Fund) grant program as part of ten-year investment planning. One award will be made for this contract. The contract period of performance is estimated to last no longer than six months.

BACKGROUND

The Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant program has been managed since 2005 by NFWF in collaboration with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Long Island Sound Study (LISS), and other partners including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Futures Fund is designed to support restoration and protection of the health and living resources of Long Island Sound. The road map guiding the Futures Fund is the [Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#) (CCMP), its themes and associated "[Implementation Actions](#)." The Futures Fund is growing and will award approximately \$6 million annually in competitive grants and technical assistance with primarily federal funding from the EPA and LISS. The Futures Fund supports projects throughout the [Long Island Sound watershed](#) with a focus on: coastal habitat, fish passage, water quality, and community and public engagement in the New York and Connecticut portions of the watershed; and on reducing nutrient and sediment pollution in the upper basin watershed states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. Learn more about the Program at NFWF's website [Long Island Sound Futures Fund](#).

In 2019, NFWF awarded a contract for development of a ten-year investment plan. Phase 1 of the planning, addressed, in part: conservation needs and threats, conservation strategies, and spatial analyses. The Phase 1 products are data packets compiled in a consistent folder structure organized by "habitat type" and contain the following:

- Data by themes including: 1) agricultural best management practice expansion, 2) urban/suburban best management practice expansion, 3) riparian buffer expansion, 4) pathogen and pollutant abatement, 5) marine debris abatement, and 6) [Long Island Sound embayment](#) area.
- geodatabase that contains raster and vector files necessary to recreate each part of the specific analyses.
- A data dictionary in the form of a text file (.txt) that describes each data layer with pertinent information (source, resolution, brief description, etc.).

- The memoranda and spreadsheet of conservation opportunity associated with each specific analysis for easy access.

Components of the investment plan have been developed and basic analyses have been conducted of habitat types and conservation strategies. NFWF is seeking additional support for Phase 2 of the planning which involves use, refinement and syntheses of existing data gathered during Phase 1, as well as any additional data needs that NFWF or the Offeror identifies to be the basis for investment by the Futures Fund over a ten-year period. Phase 2 products will include the following:

- A threat assessment and prioritization of habitat types and conservation strategy(ies) based upon spatial analyses of:
 - [Important Coastal Habitats](#) of Long Island Sound Habitat, including beaches and dunes, islands, coastal forest, tidal marsh, riverine migratory corridors, and shellfish reefs.
 - Nutrient, sediment, pathogen and marine pollution in the Long Island Sound and its rivers and tributaries from agriculture, and suburban/urban landscapes.
 - Promoting equitable access, appreciation, and understanding of Long Island Sound.
- A comprehensive results summary (Excel spreadsheet) containing all acreages and other results from the specific analysis, as well as overlay analyses demonstrating co-occurrence (and presumed co-benefits) with each of the other relevant analyses.
- A set of cartographic quality static maps to help focus conservation investments by threat, geography and conservation strategy.
- A web-based visualization tool (i.e., map) for displaying the results of the prioritization work. NFWF intends to use and update this tool during the life of the investment plan to allow people without GIS software to display and export ecological and environmental data layers and spatial priorities for conservation actions. This tool must also include a strategy and cost estimate for future maintenance and upgrading.

SCOPE OF WORK

The following tasks constitute the Scope of Work for this Request for Quotations. The Contractor should anticipate regular check-in calls with NFWF throughout the duration of the project. Please provide time and cost quotes for each Task using the Contractor Budget template provided. The deliverable for each Task will be time and resource dependent, and one or more tasks may be added or removed from the contract SOW at NFWF's discretion due to funding limitations, time constraints, the results from earlier tasks or other reasons. All products will be reviewed by NFWF staff throughout the project.

Task 1: Kick-off meeting and initial data orientation

- Kick-off meeting via Microsoft Teams during the first week of contract activation.
- Review key data sources that will be used in spatial and non-spatial analyses.
- Become familiar with the existing data, identified conservation needs, and prioritization questions to be answered via data analyses.
- Target Dates: Within 2 weeks of contract award.
- Deliverable: A detailed timeline and workplan.

Task 2: Review and modify data and prioritization methodology

- Review – and recommend modifications where applicable – data and spatial analyses that were completed in the first phase for each strategy type. Work with NFWF staff to ensure alignment with the goals and structure of the investment plan.

- Conduct a gap analysis of the content of existing data packets and identify/recommend where additional data may be needed.
- Develop a spatial analysis plan for assessing priorities for each habitat type. The plans should describe how the Offeror will use existing and/or modified data products to answer key questions to prioritize conservation actions for each habitat type, as well as identify potential synergies across habitat types and strategies. Data queries/questions will be provided by NFWF.
- Target Date: In two-week increments for each habitat type starting one month into contract.
- Deliverable: a short (1-page maximum) statement of the analytical approach for each habitat type.

Task 3: Conduct spatial analysis

- Develop data packages (i.e., geodatabases) of threats, opportunities, and conservation priorities for habitat types/actions that were missing in Phase 1.
- Conduct an interactive session(s) with NFWF staff to review and provide feedback on analytical approach and view draft results.
- Identify geographic priorities for each habitat type and synergies between multiple habitat types.
- Target Date: two weeks after Task 2 is complete.
- Deliverable: Memo summarizing outcomes of interactive session(s) including overview of prioritization scheme for each habitat type

Task 4: Quantify strategic restoration opportunities in priority places

- Based on spatial priorities for each habitat type, quantify the restoration potential in each place (i.e., the acres/miles of un-forested riparian buffer, acres/number of farms, acres of lawn on which priority conservation strategies could be implemented).
- Target Date: Aligned with target dates for each habitat type in Task 2 or Task 3, depending on whether the data packages were available or had to be developed as part of Task 3.
- Deliverable: a spreadsheet listing the restoration potential in each priority place for each priority conservation strategy (NFWF will provide a list of priority conservation strategies).

Task 5: Cartography of spatial prioritization and other maps

- Create static maps to demonstrate the created prioritization layers for each strategy and habitat type (see Background for list of strategies and habitats).
- Create maps as directed by program staff for the investment plan or communications of the plan.
- Target Date: In two-week increments for each habitat type starting one month into contract.
- Deliverable: professional cartographic maps (JPEGs).

Task 6: Develop online mapping tool

- The web map tool must be built using the ArcGIS platform. [Mapping tool example](#).
- Key input data will be vector or raster spatial data from Phase 1 and/or from Task 3.
- The tool will need to display all associated layers that were used as inputs for the spatial prioritization along with the prioritization layers. All layers must be well-organized and each layer must have the ability for the end-user to toggle.
- The tool must have the ability to export a static map of selected layers for end-users.
- Selected contractor will host the interactive web map, at least initially. All data products developed for the web map must be provided to NFWF.
- Target Date: January 14, 2022.
- Deliverable: online mapping tool of spatial analyses for NFWF, partners, applicants, grantees, and other public entities to use.



REQUIRED EXPERTISE AND PROPOSED STAFF

When submitting the budget, please identify the individuals who will work on this project, their relevant expertise, and their previous experience working with NFWF, if any. NFWF reserves the right to approve or request changes to any staffing selections that are made after this contract is awarded. This RFQ is seeking a team of professionals with the following qualifications:

- Proficiency with ESRI products to conduct spatial analyses and produce spatial products including web-based data visualization maps.
- Experience with federal and state natural resources and environmental quality program delivery and management.
- Current technical knowledge about and use of tools, technologies, practices, and conservation strategies associated with delivery of water quality, habitat restoration, species conservation, coastal resilience, and environmental education and engagement programs.
- Flexibility and enthusiasm while dealing with feedback, edits, and potential re-working of system design.
- Variety in staffing levels within the Contractor team and competitive/cost-effective budgeting.

CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Proposals will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria. Offerors should organize their Proposal Narrative based on these sections:

1. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** The Scope of Work must demonstrate an understanding of the goals of the activities involved. This section should include a description of how you will communicate with NFWF and report on progress, results, and deliverables. Weight: 10%
2. **Technical Approach.** The proposed technical approach for conducting the tasks should clearly describe the proposed methods necessary to conduct the project. The section must demonstrate that those methods are robust and appropriate for conducting the project and address any areas of complexity or uncertainty associated with conducting the project. Weight: 20%
3. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** This section should clearly describe which tasks each member of the team will conduct and how their training and experience provide the requisite experience to do so successfully. Weight: 20%
4. **Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance experience in the requested activities and products. List recent (last 2-5 years) accomplishments and previous services related to the technical expertise offered. If subcontractors are to be used, information should be provided that demonstrates their past performance as well. Describe how that past performance is applicable to this evaluation. Weight: 20%
5. **Budget.** The proposed budget should itemize work in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the entire funding request. You must use linked [Contractor Budget Template](#). You may add columns to the template for additional tasks if needed, but should not make any other changes. If applicable, please include the proposed budget for equipment purchase in the proposal separate from the Contractor Budget Template. Weight: 30%



ELIGIBLE OFFERORS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and local, state and Indian tribal governments.

By submitting a proposal 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 Quotations, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the Statement of Quotations) 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 proposal 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 Contract 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 instructions can be found here: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted under the same cover at the same time, in three distinctly labeled and separate documents: 1) Technical Proposal, 2) Budget, and 3) Evidence of Financial Stability. Interested parties should submit proposals electronically as email attachments to Erin Lewis (Erin.Lewis@nfwf.org) using the following email subject line "Phase 2: LIS & NE Investment Plan Development Proposal" and using the requirements below.

1. Technical Proposal

- Format: Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF with a font size no smaller than 11 pt.
- Contact information: Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, website, DUNS number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.
- Narrative: Concise (12-page limit) description of the work plan and a summary of the applicant's expertise and experience, organized by the Criteria for Competitive Applications.
- Biographies: Resumes and/or Vitae of key staff and their role in the proposed work area.
- References: List two clients who have received services from the applicant that is similar in nature to the proposed work; include names, phone numbers, and email address.

2. **Budget:** The budget proposal must be submitted using the following [NFWF budget template](#).

3. **Evidence of Financial Stability:** The applicant shall provide proof of financial stability in the form of financial statements, credit ratings, a line of credit, or other financial arrangements sufficient to demonstrate the applicant's capability to meet the requirements of this solicitation.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

A panel of NFWF staff will review the proposals. Offerors may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award. *Only one award will be made for this project.* If multiple institutions are involved, they should be handled through subcontracts.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

July 30, 2021

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) released. Q&A period begins. All questions of general interest will be answered publicly and must be received by August 11, 2021.

August 11, 2021

Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF. Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Erin.Lewis@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 sent to NFWF **no later than 5:00 PM EST August 11, 2021**



August 13, 2021

NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the NFWF website under "Related Content" in the original Request for Qualifications posting.

August 20, 2021

Deadline for receipt by NFWF of proposals.
Proposals must be sent electronically as an email attachment to Erin Lewis by **5:00 PM EST August 20, 2021**.
Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF.

September 15, 2021

Contract awarded to selected Offeror

January 14, 2022

All deliverables due

February 14, 2022

End of contract