



## REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

*November 3, 2021*

### ***Coordinating Technical and Financial Assistance to Farmers in Northeastern and Southeastern Iowa***

#### **OVERVIEW**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified Contractor to help provide pre-identified farmers with technical and financial assistance for the adoption of cover crops, conservation tillage, and other on-farm conservation practices in northeastern and southeastern Iowa. The contractor will help farmers sign up for Farm Bill programs, facilitate private incentive payments from NFWF, and track and report outcomes. This work will support implementation of conservation practices on 10,000 acres of farmland.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Within its portfolio of agricultural programs, NFWF provides funding for projects that accelerate the adoption of conservation practices on private working lands. Funded projects provide technical and financial assistance that help farmers enroll in Farm Bill programs, develop management plans, and design and implement best practices. This work enhances wildlife habitat, soil health, water quality and carbon storage while providing important social and economic benefits to agricultural producers.

In partnership with Syngenta, Nutrien, and the Sustainability Consortium, NFWF seeks to generate these benefits through a focused effort in northeastern and southeastern Iowa. Approximately 20 pre-identified farmers will receive technical assistance to help them enroll in Farm Bill programs and receive federal financial assistance for practices implemented. In addition, participating farmers will be eligible to receive additional private incentive payments for committing to adopt cover crops, conservation tillage and other conservation practices on acres enrolled in an Ecosystem Services Market Consortium (ESMC) pilot project. The selected Contractor will facilitate Farm Bill sign-ups and coordinate the private incentive payment process with NFWF to deliver conservation practices on 10,000 acres.

#### **SCOPE OF WORK**

The following tasks constitute the Scope of Work (SOW) for this Request for Quotations. Please describe the approach for performing each of these tasks in the Technical Approach section of the proposal narrative. Also, please provide time and cost quotes for each Task using the [Contractor Budget Template](#).

##### Task 1: Technical Assistance

The Contractor will provide technical assistance to help approximately 20 pre-identified farmers enroll in Farm Bill programs and increase adoption of cover crops, conservation tillage, and other conservation practices on 10,000 acres in northeastern and southeastern Iowa. Nutrien field staff have existing relationships with the participating farmers and will serve their primary points of contact. The Contractor will coordinate with Nutrien on a process for communicating with and engaging farmers in this effort. The



Contractor will help farmers navigate agronomic, economic, social and bureaucratic barriers to enrollment and implementation. The Contractor will help guide farmers toward programs and practices that make economic sense for their operations while providing soil health, water quantity and quality, wildlife, and carbon benefits.

#### Task 2: Payment Coordination

NFWF will provide farmers up-front incentive payments on a per-acre basis for practice implementation on acres enrolled in the ESMC pilot project. The Contractor will gather and provide NFWF with the farmer business information required to make these payments. The Contractor will compile and present NFWF with farmer payment requests in a format to be provided by NFWF. Prior to submitting farmer payment requests to NFWF, the Contractor will verify practice eligibility.

#### Task 3: Outcomes Tracking and Reporting

The Contractor will track participating acres at the farmer, state and county level and report proposed and actual outcomes in a spreadsheet reporting template to be provided by NFWF. To track on-the-ground practice implementation, the Contractor will work with Nutrien to compile data collected through practice-tracking methods as part of the ESMC pilot project. The Contractor will submit reports to NFWF twice per year, with the first report due June 30, 2022 and the second report due December 31, 2022.

#### **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**

The contract will span one year, with the possibility for extension pending availability of funding. The estimated period of performance is January 15, 2022 to January 15, 2023.

#### **CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS**

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

**Understanding of the Scope of Work.** This section must demonstrate an understanding of the goals of the activities involved. This section should also include a brief discussion of the benefits and potential challenges associated with the scope of work. Weight: 10%

**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 potential challenges and complexities associated with conducting the project. Weight: 20%

**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%



**Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance relevant to the proposed scope of work. 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 proposal. Weight: 20%

**Budget.** The proposed budget should itemize work in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the entire funding request. Budget information must be provided in the [Contractor Budget Template](#). Offerors may add columns for additional tasks if needed but should not make any other changes to the 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 proposal, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the proposal) 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 a 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 to NFWF's Central Regional Office Director, Todd Hogrefe ([todd.hogrefe@nfwf.org](mailto:todd.hogrefe@nfwf.org)) 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/organization name, address, phone, email, website, DUNS number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.
- Narrative: Concise (10-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 curriculum 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 provided [Contractor 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 AND KEY DATES**

- Nov. 17, 2021**                      Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF. Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Todd Hogrefe ([todd.hogrefe@nfwf.org](mailto:todd.hogrefe@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. To provide equitable responses, all questions must be sent to NFWF no later than 5:00 PM ET on November 17, 2021
- Nov. 22, 2021**                      NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the [NFWF website](#).
- Dec. 3, 2021**                        Deadline for receipt by NFWF of proposals. Proposals must be sent electronically as an email attachment to Todd Hogrefe ([todd.hogrefe@nfwf.org](mailto:todd.hogrefe@nfwf.org)) by 5:00 PM EST on December 3, 2021. Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF.
- Dec. 17, 2021**                      NFWF will notify selected Offeror of contract award.