

**Applicant Questions and Answers**  
**Related to the NFWF Technical Field Liaison Support Request for Quotations**  
**May 3, 2022**

Application Process and Contracting

*Q. The RFQ states that it is seeking “one or two qualified organizations or entities to serve as independent contractor(s) to NFWF”. Can you provide clarification regarding whether this solicitation excludes individuals? Do you see this position being filled by an organization with multiple staff members, or could it be carried out by one individual?*

A. We anticipate that a qualified contractor will have sufficient staff capacity to meet the needs of the National Coastal Resilience Fund and the Scope of Work described in the Request for Quotations. Unincorporated individuals are not eligible.

*Q. What is the anticipated start date for the work?*

A. We are hoping to have a contractor selected and final contracting by July 2022, with a start date in that same time frame.

*Q. What is the likelihood you would fill this position with a contractor in Alaska, with existing relationships and partnerships with other Alaskan organizations?*

A. Alaska is one of the priority regions that we have identified in the RFQ, and we will evaluate contractors’ experience working in Alaska as well as other priority regions and issue areas as one of several factors listed in the RFQ.

*Q. How competitive do you expect this contract to be?*

A. The RFQ was distributed widely, and we have received a number of inquiries from interested offerors. NFWF will not know how many proposals of interest we will receive until after the RFQ has closed.

*Q. Who served as a technical field liaison previously?*

A. Throve Environmental

*Q. We understand you have an existing contractor, will this RFQ add additional support to that team or are you anticipating selecting one or two new contractors?*

A. NFWF is re-competing our contract for technical assistance services for the NCRF. Through this RFQ we will select one or two contractors to provide these services to NFWF. Existing contractors are eligible to compete and will be evaluated on a competitive basis with other offerors per the criteria listed in the RFQ.

*Q. Is there a preference for MBE, WBE, DBE, VBE, etc. businesses to be the Prime?*

A. Small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises are strongly encouraged to apply.

*Q. Do woman-owned enterprises have to be certified as WOSB/EDWOSB, or will a state-level or DOT certification as WBE or DBE also count? If WOSB/EDWOSB is required, if a proposer is in process but has not yet received their WOSB or EDWOSB certification, will this be taken into consideration?*

A. Certification is not required.

*Q. Can you provide a contract and/or terms and conditions to review?*

A. Contract terms and conditions will be shared and negotiated with the selected contractor(s).

## Scope of Work

*Q. Is the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation looking for a firm that can support this effort on a national level where a team needs to be dedicated to building and guiding program participants, or are you looking for a regional liaison that will help guide established participants through the tasks outlined in the RFQ?*

A. NFWF is looking for a firm that has the qualifications and expertise listed in the RFQ and that can successfully implement the tasks and activities listed in the Scope of Work. Based upon review of the proposals received, this may involve contracting with one entity that can provide national-level support for the NCRF or two entities with more regional level expertise and relationships that can support NCRF at the regional level. NFWF will preference entities that have expertise and experience in the priority regions and issue areas listed in the RFQ.

*Q. Do you have a list of potential applicants that will be assigned to the liaison?*

A. No, contractors will be asked to work with applicants on an as needed basis and based upon requests for assistance from applicants and other partners and stakeholders.

*Q. National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) is a National Program. Is National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) looking for liaisons at a regional or local level? Or are you looking for 2 firms that could support the entire national program, and if so to what capacity?*

A. Per the RFQ, NFWF may contract with one or two organizations or entities to provide technical support as field liaisons for the NCRF. Depending on the proposals we receive, this may include one entity that can provide national coverage or multiple entities serving as field liaisons in different regions.

*Q. Is the liaison working as a representative of the NFWF where work is funneled through the NFWF contact (Jessica Grannis) (i.e., people to contact, conference to attend, ext.)?*

A. The field liaison team or teams selected would serve as contractor(s) to NFWF. The work under the contract will be managed by the Program Director for Coastal Resilience, per the RFQ. NFWF will work with the contractor to develop a work plan or plans to direct the work over the course of the contract including the conference and events that we are prioritizing for engaging potential applicants and other stakeholders. Contractors should also anticipate working with NFWF to address applicant and grantee questions on an as needed basis.

*Q. Can we assume that all deliverables will be submitted electronically?*

A. Yes.

*Q. What anticipated travel do you anticipate?*

A. Offerors should develop proposals that will successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFQ. NFWF anticipates that some travel may be needed to successfully implement the Scope of Work, including traveling to in-person convenings and events. NFWF will work with selected contractor(s) to identify priority conferences and events. Any proposed travel expenses should be included and justified in the budget template. Offerors could also include some discussion of assumed travel needs and estimated costs in their Technical Proposal. Please see other responses to questions about travel costs in the Questions and Answer document.

*Q. Can conferences and webinars be held virtually? If not, how many will involve travel?*

A. Where feasible participation in conferences and events can be held virtually, we would encourage contractors to participate in this manner. However, offerors should anticipate some travel to attend in-person conference and events, where needed to successfully engage potential applicants and stakeholders. Any proposed travel expenses should be included and justified in the budget template. Offerors could also include some discussion of assumed travel needs and estimated costs in their Technical Proposal that they think are necessary to successfully implement the RFQ's Scope of Work. NFWF will work with selected contractors to ensure sufficient travel budget is allocated to cover the contractors travel and other costs associated with participating in in-person events and convenings. Please see other responses to questions about travel costs in the Questions and Answer document.

*Q. Does NFWF assume that the majority of this work will occur remotely with only select travel during the period? Or does NFWF assume the opposite? The travel expectation is not quite clear and could vary significantly so any guidance would be helpful.*

A. Offerors should develop proposals that will successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFQ. However, offerors should anticipate some travel to attend in-person conference and events, where needed to successfully engage potential applicants and stakeholders. NFWF will work with selected contractor(s) to identify priority conferences and events. Any proposed travel expenses should be included and justified in the budget template. Offerors could also include some discussion of assumed travel needs and estimated costs in their Technical Proposal. Please see other responses to questions about travel costs in the Questions and Answer document.

*Q. How many webinars and/or conferences are anticipated per year?*

A. Offerors technical proposals should include tasks and activities that they think will successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFQ. We don't have a hard and fast estimate on the number of webinars or trips. We anticipate the numbers will vary greatly based on the proposed scope of work; the geographies, communities, and groups offerors propose to engage in their technical approach; and the needs of those communities or groups. For example, some communities may have the technical capacity and resources needed to engage virtually, whereas other engagements may require in person meetings to ensure success. We would like qualified offerors tell us their proposed approach and what is needed based upon the communities and geographies they propose to engage.

*Q. How many grants do you anticipate per region?*

A. The NCRF anticipates significant increased funding over the next several grant cycles as a result of funds appropriated through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. As a result, it is difficult to estimate the number of grants we will make per region with additional funds. In past grant cycles, where we have awarded between \$30-45 million in funding per cycle, we have made between 35-50 grants per cycle. Through the 2022 RFP for the NCRF, we anticipate awarding approximately \$140 million in grants.

*Q. How many semi-annual progress reports are anticipated?*

A. We anticipate that the period of performance for the field liaison contracts will be between 1-2 years. Offerors should specify the period of performance in their technical proposal and budgets and include budget needed to complete semiannual reports over their proposed period of performance.

*Q. On average, how many project sponsors request technical assistance at various stages of the process (pre-proposal, proposal, post-award)?*

A. The NCRF anticipates significant increased funding over the next several grant cycles as a result of funds appropriated through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. As a result, of this increased

funding we have also made significant changes to our Request for Proposals governing the award of NCRF funds. As a result of increased funding and changes in the RFP, it is difficult to estimate the number of applicants and interested parties that will seek technical assistance at various stages in the grantmaking process in future cycles of the NCRF. In past grant cycles with NCRF base funding, NFWF received approximately 270-280 pre-proposals. In the 2022 NCRF cycle, NFWF received more than 450 pre-proposals. Offerors technical proposals should include tasks and activities that they think will successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFQ. We anticipate the numbers will vary greatly based on the proposed scope of work; the geographies, communities, and groups offerors propose to engage in their technical approach; and the needs of those communities or groups. NFWF will work with selected contractors to develop work plan(s) to direct the work over the contract performance period in a way that meets NFWF needs and is within the budget for the contract.

*Q: The priority areas identified underserved communities as a general criterion. If the contractor has experience with underserved communities beyond the priority areas identified, is that sufficient for consideration, or are you looking only at those priority areas and the underserved communities within them?*

A. Offerors technical proposals should include tasks and activities that they think will successfully implement the Scope of Work and that meets the criteria and qualifications included in the RFQ. We will give preference to contractors that demonstrate experience and expertise working in the priority geographies, issue areas, and with priority groups listed in the RFQ. Offerors that have experience in both engaging underserved communities and experience working in priority geographies should describe that experience, as both are of interest to NFWF in selecting contractors to support this work.

## Qualifications

*Q: The RFQ references three to five years experience as a criterion, but the tasks appear to require deeper technical experience. Could you please clarify if you're seeking a mid-level professional for the daily work?*

A. Offerors technical proposals should include staff with the experience and qualifications that they think will be needed to successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFQ. NFWF anticipates that qualified offerors may include several different staff members as part of team tasked with delivering on the proposed Scope or Work and that those staff may have varying levels of experience and qualifications, including more senior level staff with specific subject matter expertise and more junior- or mid-level staff supporting the tasks and activities described by the Offeror in their technical proposal. NFWF will evaluate proposals, including resumes of key staff, based upon the desired qualifications and evaluation criteria listed in the RFQ.

## Budget

*Q: I understand from the RFQ that NFWF will not allow markups for direct costs, such as travel and sub-contracts. Yet your budget template includes a markup % over costs. As a corporate employee, my hourly and daily rates are fully loaded and include profit, so I do not think we will be adding that margin % to the total budget cost. We generally markup direct costs like travel and supplies by 10% but regularly waive that for clients who do not allow it (like NFWF). Do you have other instructions on how to handle this in your budget template?*

A. The markup percentage in the budget template refers to the fee/profit included in the labor costs provided.

*Q. For a corporation, what sorts of documentation will NFWF accept as evidence of financial stability?*

A. Financial statements comprised of a balance sheet and profit and loss statement are preferred.

*Q. Can you define half-time from the scope of work? Does this mean 20hr per week or 180 days? Should the budget be capped at half-time (180 days)?*

A. Please disregard the reference to half-time level of effort in the RFQ. Offerors should propose the level of effort they estimate is necessary to complete the tasks outlined in the RFQ and as described in the Offeror's technical approach.

*Q. Should the budget be outlined to reflect the efforts per community or the total effort each firm can dedicate toward a task?*

A. The budget should outline the total effort the offeror proposes to dedicate per task. In developing the budget, the offeror should consider the time required to successfully implement the tasks and activities included in the Scope of Work, including engaging with applicant communities and grantees. The proposed technical proposals can include any assumptions the offeror is making about the number of engagements and the time required to successfully complete each engagement.

*Q. Is there an anticipated monetary budget for the contract?*

A. NFWF cannot share information about the budget for this contract. Offerors should propose the level of effort they estimate is necessary to complete the tasks outlined in the Request for Proposals and as described in the Offeror's technical approach.

*Q. Do you have a preference of any federal agency labor categories and/or rates that should be used to develop the budget?*

A. No.

*Q: What is the simplified acquisition threshold?*

A. Please disregard the reference to the simplified acquisition threshold. Offerors should propose the level of effort they estimate is necessary to complete the tasks outlined in the RFQ and as described in the Offeror's technical approach.

#### Conflict of Interest Policies

*Q. If we apply to serve in this technical assistance/field liaison role, would we also be able to apply for and compete for project related funding? We have clients and projects that have utilized NFWF funding on coastal resilience projects in the past. Would this work conflict us out of working on NFWF funded projects during the contract period?*

A. There would be some limits in terms of the contractor's ability to apply for funding under NFWF's Conflict of Interest policies. While there is no expressed limitation in this RFQ precluding a contractor organization from receiving funds under the NCRF, NFWF's Conflict of Interest policies would likely preclude the organization from applying for funding from this program for at least the region(s) in which they are serving under the contract due to unfair knowledge of other likely proposed projects or NFWF priorities beyond what may be available publicly. NFWF would also want the contractor to represent and work with potential applicants without the perception of being a potential competitor for funding.

*Q. Is there a conflict of interest if the liaisons firm is assigned to complete the projects for the communities, of which they were aiding, when they receive grant funding through the program?*

A. Our conflict of interest policy is listed at the end of the RFQ. We will work with selected contractors to ensure compliance with this policy, including asking contractors to recuse themselves from activities that would pose a potential conflict of interest.

*Q. Is there a planned conflict avoidance process if potential conflicts arise during the course of the contract?*

A. Our conflict of interest policy is listed at the end of the RFQ. We will work with selected contractors to ensure compliance with this policy, including asking contractors to recuse themselves from activities that would pose a potential conflict of interest.

#### Other

*Q. What is the anticipated level of funding available for grantees for the National Coastal Resilience Fund over the next two years?*

A. The availability of federal funds estimated in each year's solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process; funding decisions will be made based on timing and level of funding. However, with additional funding received under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, we anticipate NCRF solicitations will have elevated funding levels over the next five grant cycles.

*Q. How will the National Coastal Resilience Fund align with the newly announced America the Beautiful Challenge grant program?*

A. We are still working out the details of how the America the Beautiful Challenge program will be administered; at the very least we anticipate identifying projects in our NCRF review that may be more appropriately funded under other NFWF programs, including the America the Beautiful Challenge. However, the focus of the field liaison team(s) will be to support the National Coastal Resilience Fund.