



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Contract to Provide Economic Valuation Support for the National Coastal Resilience Fund

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified Contractor (firm or other entity) to conduct economic valuation of ecosystem services of approximately 20-30 nature-based coastal resilience projects funded through the [National Coastal Resilience Fund](#) (NCRF). This effort will help NFWF understand and communicate the flood risk reduction and other ecosystem service benefits delivered by nature-based coastal resilience projects funded by the NCRF. Only one award will be made for this Contract. The Contract Period of Performance is estimated to be approximately two years.

BACKGROUND

The National Coastal Resilience Fund is a program that NFWF administers in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Between 2018 and 2021, more than \$140 million was invested through the NCRF to fund strategic planning, design, and implementation of coastal resilience and restoration projects. The purpose of the program is to invest in nature-based solutions with the dual goals of building community resilience to current and future flood-related coastal hazards and improving habitats for fish and wildlife.

NFWF administers the NCRF as a national grants program focused on funding projects within the coastal areas of U.S. coastal states, including the Great Lakes states, and U.S. territories¹ and tribal lands. Through the NCRF, NFWF invests in projects advancing nature-based solutions – such as restoring coastal marshes and forests, reconnecting floodplains, rebuilding dunes or other natural buffers, or installing living shorelines. NCRF projects must show clear benefits in terms of reducing current and projected threats to communities from coastal hazards (including sea-level and lake-level changes, flooding, erosion, increased frequency and/or intensity of storms, and impacts from other chronic and episodic factors such as nuisance flooding during high tides, permafrost melt, etc.) and improvements to habitats for fish and wildlife species.

NFWF is also interested in identifying projects that use innovative approaches to address coastal hazards and that are designed to be sustainable to projected future environmental conditions. NFWF grants in four categories designed to advance projects through a “project pipeline,” including: Community Capacity Building and Planning; Site Assessment and Preliminary Design; Final Design and Permitting; and Restoration-Implementation. The selected contractor will focus on assessing and quantifying the ecosystem service and other benefits delivered by NCRF-funded Restoration-Implementation projects. For more information about the Program, please visit our website at: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/national-coastal-resilience-fund>

SCOPE OF WORK

This RFP seeks proposals from entities that may serve as an independent contractor to complete an economic valuation of risk reduction and other ecosystem service benefits delivered by NCRF-funded

¹ Including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.



restoration-implementation projects and develop approximately 20-30 of economic valuation case studies of these projects.

Task 1: Develop an understanding of NCRF projects and any associated data to understand potential, risk reduction, socioeconomic, and ecosystem service benefits. The first task would be to review materials about NCRF restoration implementation projects, including the following:

- *Project documentation:* NFWF will provide the contractor with grantee-submitted documentation about NCRF projects. For in-progress projects, this includes project proposals and scopes of work, grantee metrics (e.g., projected and/or actual acres/miles of habitat restored), design plans, interim reports, and monitoring plans. Additionally, for the approximately 25 completed projects, final reports and post-construction monitoring data are also available. Some grantees have additional materials including press, videos, and other promotional materials about the project.
- *Socioeconomic assessment:* NFWF is the process of conducting geophysical modeling and socioeconomic assessment of NCRF projects. This work is assessing the coastal hazard risk reduction benefits of NCRF-funded projects using approximately 30 different socioeconomic metrics (including metrics related to health and human safety, property and infrastructure protection and enhancement, economic resilience) and data from this study may be available for some projects, but not all. If data are not available, we do **not** expect the contractor to complete detailed modeling to assess the risk-reduction benefits from the project, but offerors should include some budget and discuss the approach they would use to complete a coarse analysis to estimate and value the potential risk-reduction benefits of the projects to inform the case studies, where feasible and existing data is not available. They should also include a plan and budget for updating case studies, when data from the socioeconomic assessment becomes available.
- *Geospatial data:* NFWF will provide the contractor with basic data on the project sites, including restoration activities and spatial data on the project footprint. The contractor will be responsible for obtaining additional spatial data as needed (e.g., land cover, sea level rise) and supplying all additional information required to analyze the ecosystem service benefits of the selected projects.
- *Carbon/Jobs Data:* NFWF is developing calculators for determining the carbon sequestration and job creation benefits from our investments. Where available, NFWF will provide contractor with data from our carbon and jobs calculators estimating these benefits for selected NCRF projects.

The selected contractor will review the available project materials and data and will be prepared to apply them to the work funded under this RFP. Although no changes to existing work streams or protocols are expected, if after this Task 1 review, the contractor believes that more information is needed, the contractor should be prepared to recommend an alternative approach to better capture the data of interest. Offerors should assume that some engagement with NCRF grantees may be necessary to characterize the project and/or acquire data and should budget for some correspondence or meetings with grantees.

Task 2: Develop a methodology for selecting projects for case studies and for quantifying the ecosystem service benefits delivered by NCRF projects – After the Task 1 review, the contractor should develop a methodology for selecting approximately 20-30 NCRF projects, for conducting economic valuation of the ecosystem service benefits delivered by the selected projects, and for completing economic valuation case studies for each project.

Projects selected for case studies should include a diversity of regions/geographies, resilience activities (e.g., wetland restoration, culvert replacement, dam removal, living shoreline installation, etc.), and habitats (e.g., wetlands, dunes/beach, oyster and coral reefs, etc.). In developing the methodology for assessing ecosystem service benefits, the contractor should capture both the risk reduction benefits and other ecosystem service benefits delivered by selected projects including benefits to: water quality, recreation, fisheries, habitat, aesthetic/property values, jobs/volunteer opportunities, among others recommended by the contractor.

The methodology developed may vary some between project types and available data/literature; however, any differences in approach between projects should be documented and captured in a technical report explaining the protocols and methods applied to complete the case studies. The methodology developed should draw from project specifications and reports, peer-reviewed or other literature, and data produced through other parallel NFWF-funded projects and analyses, including ongoing socioeconomic assessments of NCRF projects, and our carbon and jobs calculators, where feasible.

- Task 2 Deliverables:

- Criteria for selecting NCRF projects for economic valuation case studies.
- Draft Technical Report describing proposed methods for completing the economic valuation of ecosystem services delivered by NCRF projects and any differences in approach needed to assess different types of resilience activities, and/or habitats created or restored in different regions. Where data are available for specific projects, the methodology should also include a discussion of how the contractor will integrate data and information from other NFWF-supported activities, including socioeconomic assessments of NCRF projects and NFWF's carbon and jobs calculators.

Task 3: Quantify and summarize the estimated ecosystem service benefits delivered by the selected NCRF projects – Using the methodology developed during Task 2, the contractor will complete approximately 20-30 economic valuation case studies of the selected projects. The economic valuation case studies should include estimated qualitative and quantitative ecosystem service benefits delivered by the projects. In addition to the case studies, the contractor will complete a summary report describing lessons learned and key findings from assessing ecosystem services across projects, in different geographies, and involving different resilience activities and habitat types.

- Task 3 Deliverables:

- Concise economic valuation case studies (~2-3 pages) of approximately 20-30 NCRF restoration-implementation projects. The case studies should briefly describe the project and include qualitative and quantitative (where feasible) estimates of the expected project benefits, based upon the methodology developed under Task 2. NFWF is planning a 5-year anniversary event in March 2023 and would like to have some case studies to share at this event. Offerors should include in their proposed work plan, timeline, and budget completion of at least 5 case studies by February 2023. Offerors should also budget for formatting and layout of final case studies.
- Short summary report (~10 pages) describing lessons learned and key findings from assessing ecosystem services across NCRF projects and a summation or aggregation of ecosystem service benefits across NCRF-funded projects, where feasible. Offerors should also budget for formatting and layout of final summary report.

- Final Technical Report describing the methodologies, assumptions, and literature referenced to complete the economic valuation of the ecosystem service benefits delivered by each project. Technical report should be polished, but formal layout and design will not be required.
- Other deliverables as called for by the contractor's proposed technical approach for completing the Scope of Work.

These deliverables may be expanded or refined during the contract negotiation.

REQUIRED EXPERTISE

- Previous experience assessing nature-based solutions for enhancing community resilience to coastal or other hazards, or climate change impacts.
- Expertise in ecosystem service and economic valuation and/or cost benefit analyses.
- Experience and specific examples of where contractor has developed products conveying complex ideas in compelling and concise narratives for a variety of audiences, including non-technical audiences and policymakers/decisionmakers.

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. **Technical Approach.** The proposed technical approach for completing the Scope of Work should demonstrate an understanding of the NCRF and NFWF's goals for completing this work. The proposed technical approach should clearly describe how the offeror will conduct the economic valuation of the benefits delivered by NCRF-funded projects, and complete case studies that will help a variety of audiences understand the benefits of these types of coastal resilience projects. This section must demonstrate that the methods proposed are robust, based in sound science, appropriate for valuing the ecosystem service benefits of these types of projects, and that the methods chosen will address any areas of complexity or uncertainty associated with this type of analysis. This section should include a description of how offerors propose to communicate with NFWF, NCRF grantees, and program stakeholders and report on progress, results, and deliverables. Weight: 30%
2. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** This section should clearly describe which tasks each member of the team will conduct and how their training and experience provides the requisite experience to do so successfully. Weight: 30%
3. **Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance and experience in ecosystem service valuation. 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 the proposed Scope of Work. Weight: 20%
4. **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 the attached [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: 20%

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 Anna Beatrice (Anna.Beatrice@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; the complete technical proposal should not exceed 10 pages.
 - ***Contact information:*** Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, website, DUNS number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.
 - ***Narrative:*** Concise (5-page limit) description of the proposed work plan, how the proposed work plan meets the needs of NFWF and the NCRF, and a summary of the applicant's expertise and experience. List recent (last 2-5 years) accomplishments and previous services related to the technical expertise offered.
 - ***Biographies:*** No more than five (5) one-page resumes and/or Vitae of key staff and a description of their role in the proposed scope of work.
 - ***References:*** List two or three 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 proposed budget should itemize work in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the entire funding request. You must use the [Contractor Budget Template](#) provided.
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 20, 2022

RFP Released

August 3, 2022

Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF.

Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Anna Beatrice (Anna.Beatrice@nfwf.org). NFWF will post all the questions and responses to all questions online 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 on August 3, 2022.**



August 10, 2022

NFWF response to questions about the solicitation.

NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the [NFWF website](#).

August 24, 2022

Deadline for receipt by NFWF of proposals.

Proposals must be received electronically as an email attachment to Anna Beatrice (Anna.Beatrice@nfwf.org) by **11:59 PM EDT on August 24, 2022**. Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF.

September 2022

Interviews with selected finalists

September 2022

Contract awarded to selected offeror

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

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 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/>