



NFWF

Questions and Answers about the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program Request for Quotations: Support for Transaction Monitoring & Evaluation Effectiveness

April 27, 2021

NFWF accepted questions about the RFP in writing through April 22, 2021. All questions and answers have been posted on NFWF's [website](#) so that all offerors have access to them at the same time. Similar questions have been combined.

1. What is the target budget amount?

We cannot share information about the budget for this evaluation. The proposed cost should be adequate for the level of effort necessary for providing robust findings. The final scope and budget for the evaluation will be negotiated between NFWF and the selected contractor.

2. How will NFWF score budgets and allocate points to the 20% weighting for that factor?

NFWF considers whether the budget request is reasonable, justified, and allows for completion of the identified tasks. Proposals will be scored using the following criteria:

- Understanding of the Scope of Work: 10%
- Technical Approach: 30%
- Qualifications of Proposed Personnel: 20%
- Contractor's Past Performance: 20%
- Budget: 20%

3. Please confirm that you are requesting one completed budget sheet for Task 1 only, and an additional budget sheet that covers all tasks (including Task 1)?

Correct. One budget should include only the budget and scope of work for Task 1 with an end date of 9/30/21. The other budget should include the full scale of the scope of work with Tasks 1-3 with an end date no later than 9/30/22.

4. May we include NFWF as a reference? Are we limited to only two client references, or may we provide more?

Yes, you may include NFWF as a reference. Yes, you may include more than two references.

5. Is there a particular driver prompting release of this RFQ?

The need for this Scope of Work was identified by CBWTP staff, and NFWF's procurement process requires a competitive RFQ for contracts of this size. The process also requires that we re-compete contracts every few years.

6. Has this service been conducted for NFWF in the past? If so, what were the strengths of the approach? Weaknesses or gaps?

Yes, this service has been conducted for CBWTP in the past. The Flow Restoration Accounting Framework was implemented in 2015 to better track progress towards defined conservation objectives for water restoration projects and transactions. Although the FRAF is available to draw from, it does not prioritize enough among the numerous monitoring and data collection activities.

7. What is the vision between the planning steps and Task 3?

The vision is to have a Contractor become familiar with the program, develop a workplan, and then implement that workplan. Task 3 is an essential part of CBWTP with reporting to BPA, and the purpose of this RFQ is to determine a better approach on how to do this and reevaluate the previous methods that have been conducted.

8. Is NFWF interested in predominantly data collection/processing from QLE partners? Or analysis of the overall CBWTP program?

The data collected from QLE partners is an essential piece of analyzing the overall CBWTP program. In order to measure the successes of water transactions in the entire program, we depend on data from our partners.

9. To what degree, if any, does NFWF consider prior direct experience applying FRAF a determining factor in contractor selection?

Applicants are not required to have previous knowledge or involvement with the FRAF.

10. Is NFWF interested in assessing Tiers 3 and 4 of the FRAF?

Yes. Tier 1 (Contractual Compliance) is required of all transactions funded through CBWTP and Tier 2 (Flow Accounting) is strongly encouraged. Although BPA funding only pays for Tier 1 and Tier 2, QLEs measure Tier 3 (Aquatic Habitat Response) and Tier 4 (Ecological Function) using cost-share and partner funding. Tier 3 and Tier 4 are valuable pieces to the FRAF and should be included in Habitat/RM&E Reports to BPA.

11. What is the "Water calculator"? Is the tool available for initial inspection?

The Water Calculator is an internal NFWF tool used to calculate the water co-benefits of NFWF investments. This is not available for external review but would be available to the selected Contractor.

12. How many QLEs will be consulted? How are they spread geographically?

Any QLE who implements water transactions should be consulted about current and future monitoring practices. State agency QLEs should be consulted as well for collaboration and consistency purposes. CBWTP currently has 12 QLEs throughout Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

13. Is there an incumbent or entities (private or public) that have been involved with NFWF on the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program? Could you provide their names?

Yes, NFWF has previously worked with an entity related to this Scope of Work; details about previously completed work will be disclosed to the selected contractor.

14. Who will be available for interviews?

NFWF staff, QLEs, and other program partners, including, but not limited to, tribal governments and organizations, and Federal government agencies.

15. Can a sample of the existing CBWTP database be provided for initial inspection?

The CBWTP database is an internal platform and will not be given access prior to selection of a Contractor. The proposal form questions are provided in the Water Transaction Process document (Attachment 1) on the [NFWF website](#). Note that the form is to be completed and submitted with the cbwtp.org portal and it is not a word document.

16. What type of platform is the CBWTP database, is there a public interface, and do QLEs currently enter data into this data base directly?

The CBWTP database platform is mysql. There is no public access, but NFWF gives permissions, as necessary. QLEs currently are given access to the database manually by NFWF staff and enter in transaction-related database directly into the site.

17. Beyond the NFWF water transactions, from which other agencies do you expect to include additional data? How much of these data will be provided by NFWF?

State agencies who are currently a QLE should be contacted and worked with to obtain additional data on CBWTP water transactions. Other partner agencies should be contacted, as necessary. NFWF will provide data provided by the QLEs, but the Contractor should be responsible for obtaining additional data on gauge locations.

18. How is monitoring data currently managed? In what format does it arrive? From how many sources? What system and standards does it enter into after being processed?

Monitoring data is currently submitted from the QLEs via Monitoring Workbooks (Excel files) into a NFWF-managed platform, Sharefile. Each QLE submits their report separately into folders created by NFWF staff. The workbooks are then reviewed by NFWF staff and the Contractor. This process should be evaluated, and improvements recommended as a part of Tasks 1 and 2.

19. What is the "carbon calculator"? Is the tool available for initial inspection?

The Carbon Calculator is an internal NFWF tool used to calculate the carbon co-benefits of NFWF investments. This is not available for external review but would be available to the selected Contractor.

20. What are NFWF and BPA's monitoring needs?

NFWF and BPA monitoring needs are to ensure water transactions are meeting contractual compliance and that the flow is accounted for. Monitoring of water transactions should show a benefit to fish and wildlife, and justify efforts and dollars spent in certain streams and/or subbasins.

21. Who should be considered in the recommendation for who is responsible for data?

The workplan should include recommendations for who is responsible for data collection, how that data is stored, and how it is analyzed and reported. This includes NFWF, QLEs, and other program partners such as state agencies.

22. Are NFWF data public?

Some grant data are publicly available on the website such as the Where We Work map and Grants Library, but not in formatted spreadsheets.

23. Who will specify the legal requirements necessary to meet? Does the legality orient on the necessary information/data reporting to the public? Or meeting contracts of performance from water transaction projects on the ground?

Monitoring requirements for CBWTP are developed by BPA with direction from the Northwest Power and Conservation Council and the Independent Science and Review Panel.

24. Will the contractor be responsible for writing the annual reports for BPA? Can NFWF provide examples of any past annual reports?

The Contractor will be responsible for developing and writing annual reports for BPA, including a Combined Compliance, Habitat, and Research Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E) report. Examples of this report will be provided to the selected Contractor.

25. At what frequency are you looking for achievement metrics? Daily? Monthly? Annually?

As a part of annual reporting to BPA, the Contractor will be expected to include metrics achieved by basin and other units. These metrics will be reported on an annual basis.

26. Will compliance reporting be done with self-reporting from grantees? Independent sources?

Compliance reporting is currently submitted through grantees self-reporting. As a part of Task 2, the workplan should include recommendations for who is responsible for data collection, how that data is stored, and how it is analyzed and reported.

27. Where should habitat and biological data be integrated in reports? Are there specific geographies in which this should happen?

Water transactions must be located within the Columbia River Basin in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. A CBWTP priority geography is defined as a sub-basin with tributaries that have identified flow as a priority limiting factor affecting ESA listed species and is expected to benefit in order of priority:

- a. ESA listed species in [BiOp](#) priority areas.
- b. ESA listed anadromous species not specified above ([National Marine Fisheries Service](#) and [2019 CRS BiOp](#)).
- c. ESA listed resident [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) or state species of concern (by one or more of [OR](#), [WA](#), [ID](#), [MT](#)).
- d. Other fish or wildlife not listed above where a benefit can be tied to increased flows in a specific location.

Integration of habitat and biological data should be incorporated wherever it is available and relevant for project streams.

28. How much fieldwork do you expect a contractor to conduct? What type of field work might it entail?

Fieldwork is not anticipated for this Scope of Work. It may include site visits or data collection on a limited basis.

29. How many tools/models does NFWF expect to inform from the data?

Data should inform the water and carbon calculators, in addition to BPA tools such as cbfish.

30. Are you interested only in flows for reporting? Additional co-benefits (i.e. water quality)?

Reporting should cover the entirety of the FRAF, including contractual compliance, flow accounting, aquatic habitat response, and ecological function.

31. Can you provide a current GIS layer to show the current state of existing data metrics as specified in the RFQ?

Spatial data for water transactions will be shared upon execution of the contract.

32. How long do you expect a contractor to manage the GIS layers? Are you anticipating multiple GIS layers, or just one? Who will do future updates to it after the contract is finished?

The contractor will be expected to manage the GIS layers through the period of the contract. Multiple GIS layers will need to be managed including annual updates. The contractor should develop the product in a manner that allows NFWF, or another entity, to manage and update the spatial data after the contract is finished.

33. Task 3 deliverables include “Develop and Manage an online GIS mapping tool that NFWF and BPA can access, which shows each transaction along with the associated metrics, years instream, cost, and associated habitat restoration work.” Does NFWF have an expectation of the minimum functionality and total duration of the hosting and maintaining of this resource after project completion?

See answer to question 32.

34. Are the GIS data expected to integrate with other PNW data management programs (e.g., StreamNet)?

Currently, gauge data is entered into one other Pacific Northwest data management system, Monitoring Resources. Any further suggestions for data integration or compilation should be included in the workplan in Task 2.

35. To what extent does NFWF anticipate that requested the monitoring efforts will support any runoff, surface, or groundwater modeling to assess flow transactions during quantitative analysis and any subsequent adaptive management efforts?

Historically, flow transaction modeling has been based on data supplied by the funded entities and public sources; CBWTP has not developed its own modeling efforts.

36. Approximately what portion of transactions are comprised of water right transfers as opposed contractual agreements where the water user keeps the water right?

Approximately 70% of transactions are comprised of water right transfers, while 20% are contractual agreements where the water user keeps the water right. The remaining 10% represents “other” types of transactions.

37. Is actual historical water use evaluated prior to all transactions including water use reduction contracts? Or is it considered only when water rights are purchased and transferred?

Historic streamflow data is available in some but not all reaches in which transactions have been funded. All transactions involve water rights with a recent use history, although the nature of the information available differs between regions and transactions.

38. Does NFWF consider actual diversion/withdrawal rates when evaluating transaction compliance and effectiveness?

Transaction compliance is based on funding agreements in which the water rights are not diverted, but rather left instream. Effectiveness is best evaluated as a change in condition in the stream reach in addressing identified limiting factors.

39. It appears that the FRAF accounting system does not account for irrigation return flows from groundwater. Are return flows considered when evaluating transactions?

CBWTP transactions exclusively involve reducing diversions of surface water rights, and the resulting instream benefit from doing so.

40. How long after a transaction is completed does NFWF provide funding to QLEs for continued compliance and effectiveness monitoring? To what extent has NFWF considered automating portions of these tasks?

CBWTP provides funding for compliance and effectiveness monitoring under annual contracts to entities qualified through an annual qualification process.

41. To what extent is NFWF open to revisiting and improving quantitative methods used to measure and evaluate program effectiveness?

As a part of Task 2, the Contractor should recommend a monitoring workplan for efficiently compiling and analyzing data for program improvement and reporting and integrating them into CBWTP data management systems. This includes revisiting and improving upon existing methods to measure and evaluate program effectiveness.

42. What type of databases are currently being used to manage the FRAF monitoring data? Are these databases hosted within NFWF’s network or in the cloud?

The FRAF monitoring data is currently held within Monitoring Workbooks (Excel), the CBWTP database, and GIS. These are hosted within both NFWF’s network and in the cloud.

43. How large is the database (i.e., memory footprint) and by approximately how much does it grow each year?

The current size of the uncompressed database is 190.8MB. Growth of that is extremely variable, but is roughly 16% a year.

44. Approximately how many users access the FRAF data on a daily basis?

Data is submitted by QLEs in the form of Monitoring Workbooks (Excel) and the CBWTP database. NFWF staff uses and accesses this data on a daily basis and QLEs currently submit it upon request once per year.

45. Is NFWF open to suggested improvements to the data management technology stack and hosting strategy as part of the recommendations made in Task 2?

Yes, NFWF is open to suggested improvements for data management.