



REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

MMRV of Greenhouse Gas Benefits Associated with Grassland Management

Deadline: October 17, 2024

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified Contractor to fulfill greenhouse gas (GHG) monitoring, measuring, reporting, and verification (MMRV) needs associated with improved grazing practices in the United States. Sites will likely be initially concentrated in the Great Plains, with additional participation expected from ranches nationwide. Required capabilities include direct interfacing with ranchers to sign agreements, training them on data-collection needs and workflows, and managing disbursement of incentive payments; on-the-ground and remote data collection and practice verification; GHG flux modeling; reporting and data-sharing with NFWF and corporate funders; and other support and training as needed. The Contractor should have a data-collection and reporting platform that adheres to a high degree of data security and privacy standards. One award will be made for this Contract. NFWF requests a scope of work and budget to cover the MMRV over a 10-year period. The initial Contract period of performance will be approximately 5 years, with the possibility of renewing for a second 5-year term. This request is prospective: the scope of work and initial start date is contingent upon NFWF securing funding to support this Contract.

The MMRV approach must meet the needs of NFWF's corporate partners. Many NFWF corporate partners are committed to adhering to the GHG Protocol and SBTi reporting guidance in relation to Scope 3 insets. These industry standards are still being developed and compliance with them can depend on a company's individual circumstances. Therefore, it will be essential for the Contractor to understand NFWF partner needs regarding such standards. The Contractor must also be attuned to industry standards as they continue to evolve to ensure that the MMRV plan is and remains sufficient during the period of performance.

BACKGROUND

Since its founding in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest private conservation grant maker, supporting conservation efforts in all 50 states and U.S. territories. These efforts protect and restore imperiled species, promote healthy oceans and estuaries, improve working landscapes for wildlife, advance sustainable fisheries, and conserve water for wildlife and people.

Within the Great Plains and beyond, NFWF invests in improving grazing management to benefit native grassland species, maintain rancher livelihoods, and support Tribal conservation efforts. Increasingly, NFWF and funders seek to understand the GHG implications of this grantmaking. Several of NFWF's corporate partners are interested in the potential for improved grazing management to sequester atmospheric CO_{2e}, thus reducing their Scope 3 emissions within their supply sheds.

NFWF currently quantifies the atmospheric CO_{2e} sequestered through improved grazing management investments using existing publicly available datasets for soil organic carbon, change factors expected from different grazing intensities, and climatic zones. These estimates are not derived from sampled data (either



in situ or from remote sources), making them useful for planning purposes but not sufficient to meet the increasingly rigorous reporting needs for a growing number of NFWF's corporate partners.

NFWF seeks an end-to-end GHG MMRV solution specific to its grazing management projects. Because its grazing management investments occur across millions of acres, NFWF has recently partnered with Woodwell Climate Research Center (Woodwell) to develop a novel carbon flux model that is focused on measuring carbon flux at large regional scales, initially focused in the Northern Great Plains. This model leverages a combination of soil sampling, remote sensing, and process-based modeling to generate carbon removal estimates. The successful MMRV Contractor will need to be model-agnostic and capable of providing ranch-level input data to run the model developed by Woodwell. However, NFWF is interested in comparisons to other inventory-type models capable of measuring carbon fluxes at regional scales, so an MMRV provider developing an integrated approach to measure carbon fluxes at landscape to regional scales is desired. A data platform that facilitates data-collection and data-sharing and reporting, while maintaining strong data security and privacy, is essential. Data collection should include field and ranch spatial boundaries, producer practice details (grazing management plan, heads of cattle, etc.), and contact information of producers in addition to the soil sampling and remote-sensing data. Models should be calibrated to grassland grazing ecosystems and validated using *in situ* sampling.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Scope of Work under this Contract is to provide an end-to-end GHG MMRV solution for NFWF's grazing lands management grants nationwide. The MMRV methodology is expected to outline a hybrid approach whereby *in situ* soil sampling will be used in combination with process-based biophysical models, remote sensing, and/or other technologies.

MMRV attributes should include:

- Being specific to, and commensurate with, NFWF investments across the landscape. NFWF invests in several practices, at a large scale (millions of acres), with grant agreements that are 2–3 years on average.
- A scientifically sound methodology that links soil sampling with other sources of information to estimate the net GHG benefits of projects (including benefits related to CO₂ and any other gases, such as CH₄ and N₂O, where relevant). Other sources of information might include process-based biophysical models, remote sensing, flux towers, vegetation sampling, and emission factors in relation to changes in herd size and fertilizer application (where relevant, for estimating changes in CH₄ and N₂O emissions).
- Collection of information from producers including field boundaries, number of animals, and grazing management practices implemented.
- Issuance, tracking, and management of agreements with and incentive payments to participating producers, including agreements preventing double-counting of GHG benefits.
- Detailed estimates for the annual expense and time required to fully implement the MMRV plan for 5–10 million acres over the next 10 years, with budgets detailing costs for the initial 5-year period of performance as well as the full project cost over 10 years. If more than one estimate is given for annual expenses (either for certain components or as a whole) the trade-offs between high and low estimates should be fully explained. Budgets should reflect an expectation to conduct soil sampling

on a subset (perhaps 10–20%) of the estimated 5–10 million acres, with the level of sampling determined through a scientifically defensible process.

The following tasks constitute the Scope of Work for this Request for Quotations (RFQ). The initial two tasks allow the Contractor and NFWF staff to identify NFWF’s needs and advance the Contractor’s understanding of NFWF projects. The third through fifth tasks are at the heart of the RFQ and encompass the full suite of end-to-end MMRV activities, from outlining workflow, procedures and protocols via an MMRV plan to the final reporting of results to corporate partners. One or more tasks may be added or removed from the Contract Scope of Work at NFWF’s discretion based on the results of the initial tasks.

The Contractor should anticipate check-in calls with NFWF approximately every two weeks throughout the duration of the project.

Task 1: Kick-off meeting and introduction to NFWF-funded improved grazing management

- Hold kick-off meeting to discuss NFWF needs (described under the Scope of Work) for the project.
 - Discussion with program staff about the grantmaking structure and process, including relationships with grantees and producers and types of practices of interest in this endeavor.
 - Discussion with Government and Corporate Relations teams about the current state of NFWF’s relationships with corporations and other GHG-interested entities.

Deliverables: Notes from kick-off meeting with summary of NFWF needs for the plan.

Schedule: Within 2 weeks of Contract start date.

Task 2: Defining data-collection needs and developing an MMRV plan

- Meet with Corporate Relations team and select corporate partners to understand specific data and reporting needs.
- Review NFWF’s portfolio of improved grazing management projects.
- Through review of the literature, Contractor expertise, and discussion with NFWF and corporate staff, draft an MMRV plan that lays out: the different types of data to be acquired; the process of data acquisition, flow, and processing; and the how these data will work together to estimate the net GHG benefits of NFWF’s investments.

Deliverables: Memo describing data to be collected sufficient for meeting the needs of our corporate partners in reporting Scope 3 GHG benefits, as well as an MMRV plan describing a proposed workflow with procedures and protocols for implementing the MMRV approach.

Schedule: Memo to be completed within 2 months of Contract start date. MMRV plan to be completed within 3 months of Contract start date.

Task 3: Management and tracking of producer agreements and payments

- Communicate with on-the-ground parties, including NFWF grantees, producers, and any subcontractors as necessary to coordinate data collection processes.
- Maintain database of agreements with producers.
- Manage, track and report payments to producers (Indicate if disbursing payments is not within your capabilities and/or if you plan to outsource payment management to an affiliate or partner organization.)

Deliverables: Development and maintenance of a comprehensive dataset for participating producers with signed agreements, terms and conditions of agreements (including but not limited to rights to GHG benefits), and expiration dates; timely payment disbursements to participating producers.

Schedule: Initial communication with on-the-ground parties, process for incentive payments created, and database developed within the first 5 months of Contract start date. Continued communication with on-the-ground parties, coordination and management of agreements, and database maintenance through the life of the Contract.

Task 4: MMRV Implementation

- Collect necessary data, including practice data as needed from producers, field-level spatial data, soil samples, remote sensing data, soil and climate data, etc.
- Use collected data to spin-up and run a process-based model to estimate CO₂e removals at a ranch-level (Indicate capabilities relating to run process-based models and/or ability to accommodate multiple models). Model(s) to be used may be determined, in part, by NFWF corporate partner requirements, but the Contractor must also make data available for use with the model developed by Woodwell.

Deliverables: All input data collected, results, and analyses, to be shared with NFWF and other partners (TBD), and accessible online through a data portal.

Schedule: Proposal should indicate a best estimate for when data, results and analyses could be first made available through an online data portal. Providing information in this fashion will continue through the life of the Contract.

Task 5: Incorporate results into corporate reports and communications

- Distill results into format requested by NFWF that satisfies corporate partner needs for Scope 3 removals reporting.

Deliverables: Results and analyses in form requested by NFWF.

Schedule: Specific reporting schedule to be determined through consultation between NFWF and the Contractor, but the Contractor should expect to report to NFWF at least bi-annually through the life of the contract.

MISCELLANEOUS

- NFWF staff will provide Contractor with access to Excel spreadsheets that include data on NFWF grant projects (e.g., budget, location, description of activities), grantee proposals, and other relevant information, as available.
- Contractor shall treat all such information as CONFIDENTIAL without express written permission from NFWF to share, disclose, or otherwise use that information for purposes beyond this project.
- All data, code, models, and other information developed under the Contract shall be the property of NFWF at the conclusion of this project unless negotiated otherwise at the time of contracting.

REQUIRED EXPERTISE

The successful Applicant will have significant expertise in the following areas:

- Greenhouse Gas Protocol and SBTi FLAG Scope 3 Guidance for corporate reporting
- Soil organic carbon measurement and modeling practices, plus estimation of non-CO₂ GHG fluxes from grazing lands
- Experimental design and statistical analyses
- Project management with multiple stakeholders (NFWF, corporate partners, NFWF grantees, landowners)
- Database and platform management, including data privacy
- Adhering to Contract timelines and budgets

CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Proposals will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria. Applicants should organize their Work Plan Narratives (as part of the Technical Proposal, see below) based on these sections:

1. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** This section must demonstrate an understanding of the goals of the activities involved under this Contract. It should describe an approach for communicating with NFWF and reporting on progress, results, and deliverables. Weight: 10%
2. **Technical Approach.** This section must outline the proposed technical approach for: 1) understanding NFWF's needs for the MMRV; 2) determining data-collection needs and developing an MMRV plan describing a proposed workflow with procedures and protocol for implementing the MMRV approach; 3) managing and tracking producer agreements and payments; 4) implementing the MMRV plan; and 5) reporting results. This section should clearly describe the proposed methods and demonstrate that they are robust and appropriate for conducting the project and address any areas of complexity or uncertainty. Weight: 25%
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 skills to do so successfully. Weight: 25%
4. **Applicant's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance experience, particularly any associated with GHG accounting in relation to nature-based solutions. 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. Applicants must use the [Contractor Budget Template \(5-year term\)](#) to outline a budget for the initial proposed 5-year term of the Contract. Applicants may add columns to the template for additional tasks if needed but should not make any other changes. In addition to including a completed Contractor Budget template for the initial 5-year term, the proposal should include a separate budget narrative and table that describes the annual costs of implementing the project over a potential 10-year period. The budgets and narrative should describe all costs, including but not limited to personnel, travel, data collection, soil sampling and lab analyses (e.g., number of samples, cost per sample), and any likely subcontractors already identified. Weight: 20%

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, local and state governments, and Tribal Nations. Small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises are strongly encouraged to apply.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the Applicant warrants and represents that it does not currently have any apparent or actual conflict of interest, as described herein. In the event an Applicant 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 Applicant 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 Applicant, the Applicant's employees, or the Applicant'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 Applicant 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 Applicant 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 four distinctly labeled and separate documents: 1) Technical Proposal, 2) [Contractor Budget Template \(5-year term\)](#), 3) Budget Narrative and Table (10 years), and 4) Evidence of Financial Stability.

Interested parties should submit proposals electronically to NFWF (ernest.newborn@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. (Embedded tables can use a different font size from 11 pt; however, please ensure the size is sufficiently large for readability.) Note: The only section of the proposal that has a page limit is the work plan narrative (maximum of 6 pages).
- **Contact information**: Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, website, UEI number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.
- **Work Plan Narrative**: Concise (6-page limit) description of the proposed work plan.
- **Past Experience**: Summarize Applicant's expertise and experience. List recent (last 2–5 years) accomplishments and previous services related to the technical expertise offered.
- **Biographies**: Resumes and/or Vitae of key staff and their role in the proposed work area.
- **References**: List two references who have received services from the Applicant that are similar in nature to the proposed work; include names, phone numbers, and email addresses.
- **Example**: Provide a report on a similar topic, embedded in the technical proposal or attached separately.

2. **Contractor Budget Template (5-year term):** Applicants must use the [Contractor Budget Template \(5-year term\)](#) to outline a budget for the initial proposed 5-year term of the Contract. Applicants may add columns to the template for additional tasks if needed but should not make any other changes.
3. **Budget Narrative and Table (10 years):** In addition to including a completed Contractor Budget template for the initial 5-year term, the proposal should include a separate budget narrative and table that describes the annual costs of implementing the project over a potential 10-year period. The budgets and narrative should describe all costs, including but not limited to personnel, travel, data collection, soil sampling (e.g., number of samples, cost per sample), lab analyses, and any likely subcontractors already identified.
4. **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 and NFWF partners will review the proposals. Applicants 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, their work may be supported through subcontracts.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

- September 27, 2024** Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF. Applicants should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Ernest Newborn (ernest.newborn@nfwf.org). NFWF will post all the questions and responses to all questions so that all Applicants have access to them at the same time. To provide equitable responses, all questions must be sent to NFWF **no later than 8:00 PM EDT on September 27, 2024**.
- October 2, 2024** NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the NFWF website [here](#).
- October 17, 2024** Deadline for proposal submission to NFWF. Proposals must be sent electronically as email attachments to Ernest Newborn (ernest.newborn@nfwf.org) by **5:00 PM EDT on October 17, 2024**. Proposals must be provided in Word or searchable PDF format.
- January 2025** Selected Applicant notified of Contract award.
- January 2030** Expiration of the first 5-year term of Contract. The possibility for renewal of the Contract for a second 5-year term will be assessed based on multiple factors and is not guaranteed.