



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Great Lakes Program Grantee Technical Assistance for Regulatory Compliance

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified Contractor to assist NFWF and its grantees with compiling, reviewing and submitting federal regulatory compliance requirements for NFWF's Great Lakes Programs – Sustain Our Great Lakes, Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund and Great Lakes projects awarded under the Conservation Partners Program. The Great Lakes Programs are designed to restore and enhance habitat and water quality in the Great Lakes basin. You can obtain a copy of the Program's Business Plan on NFWF's website, <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/sustain-our-great-lakes-program>.

BACKGROUND

While the program includes a variety of goals, the scope of work under this contract is for the development of a Projects selected for funding through these programs often are subject to federal compliance requirements. NFWF is seeking a qualified contractor to provide technical assistance to grantees in meeting such compliance requirements, including the following:

- Documentation to support Federal assessments under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Documentation of compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (state and federal)
- Documentation required under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Other required reporting of grant outcomes and outputs (metrics and achievements) for NFWF and partners.

NFWF's Great Lakes Programs have grown, the need for effective technical guidance and support has grown as well. We are seeking to learn how a professional environmental consultant or company may be able to assist potential grantees with the necessary compliance documentation.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected party will perform the following activities for the Sustain Our Great Lakes, Chi-Cal Rivers Fund and Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund grant programs.

- Create and disseminate environmental compliance guidance documents and examples for grantees.
- NEPA/ESA/NHPA related compliance Review, and characterize for NFWF, individual projects by compliance type informed by a formal understanding of NEPA/ESA/NHPA.
- Act as liaison between grantee and contacts at FWS to obtain federal compliance approval.
- Provide guidance and support of individual grantees to develop information and materials required for NEPA/ESA/NHPA and related consultations.
- Prepare for grantees' lists of materials needed to support compliance review by the federal agency, including the types of required information (e.g., project details/description of the action, design drawings, plan-views, maps, photos, land-use history/environmental setting, existing surveys/database information, IPaC, etc.).



NFWF anticipates the following project compliance needs in the coming year:

- Regulatory compliance and other required project outcome reporting:
 - Approximately fifty-five consultations with NFWF grantees to collect and review project data (e.g., project progress, ecological impact, outcomes achieved (e.g., acres restored, miles stream reconnected etc.), partners engaged and modification/scope change tracking. Outputs will be incorporated into regulatory compliance and required outcome reporting for NFWF and other required partner tracking efforts.
 - Provide guidance to and support of individual grantees to organize and develop information needed to prepare regulatory compliance (NEPA/ESA/NHPA) and other required outcome reporting templates for review by NFWF and/or relevant federal agency.
 - Assist grantees as needed to develop clarifying responses if questions arise or comments made during regulatory compliance or other required outcome reporting review.
 - Approximately forty consultations for projects that include minimal or standard activities, and universally accepted Standard Operating Procedures and conservation measures are already incorporated into the project.
 - Fifteen consultations or fewer for projects likely to have a significant effect (either positive or negative) on an aspect of the environment; and which will require a complete compliance review. Projects might include on-the-ground work, ground-disturbing activities with potential Tribal consultation or State Historic Preservation Act review needed, or other potential effects to the human environment.
- Contract progress reporting:
 - Contractor will keep an up-to-date spreadsheet or database detailing status and updates for project consultations, regulatory compliance document preparation, submission and agency approval, and other required outcome reporting progress/submission. This should be accessible by NFWF at any time.
 - Contractor will connect with NFWF staff monthly via short check-in calls to discuss progress, issues and status of the contract. In advance of these calls, NFWF will provide relevant updates on projects being added to contract queue when relevant.

In addition to the consultations and documentation, the contract deliverables will also include providing information/updates upon request outside of the set schedule for check-ins.

This list above outlines the general scope of work to be addressed under this RFP; however, it is subject to change in response to additional similar task orders as needed.

The period of performance will be 13 months from the date of the award to the selected party with an option to extend for additional years, to be exercised at NFWF's discretion.

REQUIRED EXPERTISE AND PROPOSED STAFF



Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, and individual consultants. Qualified, certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) (small, minority and women-owned businesses) are strongly encouraged to apply.

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. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** The Scope of Work must demonstrate an understanding of the goals of the activities involved. This section should include a description of how you will communicate with NFWF and program stakeholders and report on progress, results, and deliverables. Weight: 20%
2. **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 any areas of complexity or uncertainty associated with *conducting the project*. Weight: 20%
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 experience to do so successfully. Weight: 20%
4. **Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance experience in *outcomes reporting for conservation projects, experience in preparing regulatory compliance documentation for FWS, EPA etc. Experience in implementing conservation projects and completing regulatory compliance is preferred*. 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. 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%

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/>

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 (**Traci Giefer**, traci.giefer@nfwf.org) using the requirements below:

1. Technical Proposal



NFWF

- 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 name, address, phone, email, website, UEI number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.
 - Scope of Work: Concise (4-page limit) description of the work plan, specific tasks and deliverables and a summary of the applicant’s expertise and experience, organized by the Criteria for Competitive Applications.
 - Biographies: Resumes and/or Vitae of key staff and their role in the proposed work area.
 - References: List two clients who have received services from the applicant that are similar in nature to the proposed work; include names, phone numbers, and email address.
2. **Budget:** The budget proposal must be submitted using the following NFWF budget template linked [here](#).
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

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| November 6, 2024 | Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF. Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Traci Giefer (traci.giefer@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. In order to provide equitable responses, all questions must be sent to NFWF no later than 5:00 PM CT on November 6, 2024. |
| November 8, 2024 | NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the NFWF website at www.nfwf.org/greatlakes . |
| November 19, 2024 | Deadline for receipt by NFWF of proposals. Proposals must be sent electronically as an email attachment to Traci Giefer by 5:00 PM CT November 19, 2024. Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF. |
| December, 2024 | Contract award to selected Offeror |
| December 31, 2025 | Deliverables Due |