

Questions and Answers
from Interested Parties for RFP-K00R8400008
Last Updated 10/31/17

Questions and Answers (as of October 26, 2017)

Q: On p. 9, item #5, the contractor is directed to assess “alternative models of regulation and market-based tools...to promote the goals of the RPS and energy policies of the State.” By alternative models, does that mean non-RPS policies such as system benefit charges or state tax incentives? Or different versions of state RPS policies, such as centralized procurement of renewable energy as practiced in Illinois and in New York?

A: Item #5 on p. 9, states that the Contractor will include in its review “an assessment of alternative models of regulation and market-based tools that may be available or advisable to promote the goals of the RPS and the energy policies of the State.” For purposes of the solicitation, the Offeror should assume that “alternative models of regulation and market-based tools” include market-based instruments and complementary policies, such as system benefit charges or state tax incentives, as well as assessing other state RPS policies, such as centralized procurement of renewable energy as practiced in Illinois and in New York.

Q: How will travel reimbursement be handled during the performance of the contract?

A: See Section 2.3.1 of the General Requirements and Appendix A, definition 2: Section 2.3.1 states that the Offeror should assume that only routine travel will be required for this study. Appendix A, definition 2, states, *Routine Travel - Travel within a 100-mile radius of DNR or the Contractor’s facility, whichever is closer to the intended destination. There will be no payment for labor hours for travel time or reimbursement for any travel expenses within this radius. Non-routine travel is not anticipated for the work required for the Contract.*

Q: Does a Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise need to be registered on eMaryland Marketplace, or otherwise registered as a VSBE in Maryland in order to qualify for the VSBE requirement in the RFP? Or does being registered for the U.S. Veteran Department of Veterans Affairs’ Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization sufficient for meeting the VSBE requirement in the RFP?

A: Please refer to the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs at veterans.maryland.gov/veteran-owned-small-business, which states that to qualify, veteran owned businesses must be verified by the Center for Validation and Evaluation

of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. The website also says that the VSBE should register on eMM. eMM registration is free.

Q: How should other direct costs, such as copying, overnight express shipments, etc., be reflected in the financial proposal form, Attachment B-2?

A: Routine office expenses will be covered under the labor category rates listed in Attachment B-2. Please refer to (I) on page 45 under Attachment B-1, Financial Proposal Instructions: *All Financial Proposal prices (Labor Category Rate * Number of Hours) are to be fully loaded prices that include all costs/expenses associated with the provision of services as required by the RFP. The Financial Proposal price shall include, but is not limited to, all: labor, profit/overhead, general operating, administrative, and all other expenses and costs necessary to perform the work set forth in the solicitation. No other amounts will be paid to the Contractor.* PPRP anticipates that large copying jobs and express mail will be minimized. Information, sections of reports, etc., will mostly be handled electronically, via a secured FTP or website. Extraordinary expenses, such as large copying jobs and express mail will be handled by PPRP, and would not be the responsibility of the contractor.

Q: Regarding Attachment B-2, will the winning bidder have flexibility in moving the number of hours specified by labor category from one category to another as long as the budget does not change, or will those hours be viewed as fixed and not subject to change? For example, if an Economist worked more hours than a Senior Economist, will that be ok?

A: Yes, the number of hours provided in any labor category is the Offeror's best estimate as of the time of the bid and is for purposes of evaluation of the bid. During the study, the actual number of hours within any give labor category may change, with PPRP Contract Monitor preapproval, as long as the total cost of the study does not change. See the following from Attachment B-1, Item J: *Unless indicated elsewhere in the RFP, sample amounts used for calculations on the Financial Proposal Form are typically estimates for evaluation purposes only.* Also note the following from Appendix A, definition 1: *Total Proposal Price - The Offeror's total proposed price for services in response to this solicitation, included in the Financial Proposal with Attachment B – Financial Proposal Form, and used in the financial evaluation of Proposals.*

Q: Does DNR anticipate printing hard copies of the final report, and if so, how many? How should these expenses be reflected in the financial proposal form, if they are to be reflected at all?

A: Yes, PPRP anticipates that the final report will be in printed and on the PPRP website for others to download; PPRP will handle this cost separately from the contract. In other words, the contractor will not be responsible for these costs.

Q: On p. 8, the RFP discusses “potential stakeholder interfaces, such as the Power Plant Research Advisory Committee, Maryland State Agencies, and the general public.” What kind of interfaces are intended? Public meetings? Individual agency meetings, and if so, with which agencies? Does the Department of Natural Resources envision having public meetings, and if so, how many and where?

A: PPRP anticipates that most of meetings between the Contractor and PPRP and some stakeholder meetings will be conducted by conference call or by webinar. However, for the purposes of this solicitation, the Offeror should assume the following conservative estimates:

- a) For PPRAC: Like other major efforts PPRP has done of this nature, PPRP envisions creating one (or a few) working groups of the Power Plant Advisory Committee (PPRAC) for providing ongoing feedback into the development of the report. For purposes of this proposal, the Offeror should simply assume a total of one, ½ day, meeting each month. In addition, the Offeror should assume one meeting of the full PPRAC every 6 months (duration of ½ day) during the timeframe of the project.
- b) For Maryland State Agencies: Offeror should assume one, ½ day, group meeting with several state agencies (such as MEA, MDE and/or others) on a monthly basis during the duration of the project.
- c) Other stakeholders (e.g., the General Assembly, renewable developers, environmental groups): Offeror should assume one full day of meetings with other stakeholders on a monthly basis for the first 4 months after contract award and the last 6 months of the project (from final draft report until the end of the 2020 Session of the Maryland General Assembly). In, the interim period, the Offeror should assume that stakeholder interactions will be contained within PPRAC WG interactions.

For a) – c), the Offeror should assume that all meetings will be held in Annapolis.

- d) General Public: The Offeror should assume 3 public meeting meetings shortly after the issuance of the initial report (one evening meeting on the Eastern Shore, one in Annapolis and one in Western Maryland), and the same for the final draft report.

Q: The Scope of Work indicates that the Contractor should include the following in the review: the availability of all clean energy sources, including renewables. What does PPRP consider to be “clean energy sources?”

A: For the purposes of this solicitation, the Offeror should assume that clean energy sources consist of technologies that do not pollute the atmosphere during the generation of electricity.

Q: On page 10, item #12 states “any other matters that the PPRP considers relevant to the analysis of the issues identified above.” If PPRP wants the contractor to address other matters, will that result in a modified budget to reflect the additional work?

A: Note that this requirement comes directly from HB1414. PPRP does not envision “any other matters” to be addressed during the study. However, if any other matters are identified that PPRP considers relevant to the study, they would be conducted based on available resources within the overall budget (total blanket purchase order) established by the single contract awarded in response to this RFP.

Q: On page 10, item #E requests the ability to meet current and potential future RPS targets without Maryland Tier 1 resources. Is the analysis to be done on a technology-by-technology basis, such as whether the RPS targets can be met without wind, then without solar, etc., or will multiple technologies have to be studied as well, such as without wind AND solar?

A: For purposes of this solicitation, the Offeror should assume that the analysis will be done on a technology-by-technology basis, such as whether the RPS targets can be met without wind, then without solar, etc. Multiple technologies will not have to be studied as well, such as without wind+solar.

Q: On page 13, Section 3.1.7 requires subcontractors providing “primary services”, but not “ancillary services”, must meet the insurance requirements specified in Section 3.1. Please define is meant by “primary services” and “ancillary services.”

A: Section 3.1.7 states, that the Contractor shall require that any subcontractors providing primary services (as opposed to non-critical, ancillary services) under this Contract obtain and maintain the same levels of insurance and shall provide the Contract Monitor with the same documentation as is required of the Contractor. For purposes of this solicitation, non-critical means any work that does not result in a major conclusion of the report or in a recommendation to the General Assembly. Only you will know if your teaming arrangement results a subcontractor having a “primary” responsibility in a given area. If in doubt, then assume the subcontractor will be providing a primary service.

Q: Regarding the criminal background check requirement in Section 3.2.2 on p. 14, how current does the criminal background check have to be?

A: The criminal background check must have been completed within the last 5 years.

Q: Section 3.9 on p. 16 requires the contractor to assist in the “orderly transition of services” from the contract awarded for this solicitation to any subsequent contractor. What does the Maryland Department of Natural Resources have in mind? Does the Maryland Department of Natural Resources intend to have a future solicitation regarding the Maryland Renewable Portfolio Standard?

A: This section is one of the many standard RFP conditions and does not imply that PPRP intends or is expecting a future solicitation on this subject.

Q: Are the subcontractors required to provide the information in Section 5.4.2.10 on p. 36, or just the primary contractor?

A: Section 5.4.2.10 requires the Offeror to provide a list of all contracts with any entity of the State of Maryland for which it is currently performing services or for which services have been completed within the last five (5) years. As defined in Appendix A, #15, the Offeror is the entity that submits a proposal in response to this RFP. Subcontractors are not required to provide this information.

Q: How are Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to be included in Attachment B-2, as there is no separate category for them?

A: You are mistaken. There is a separate category for SMEs on the financial proposal form (Attachment B-2).

Q: For part K of Attachment B-1 on p. 46, how are Subject Matter Experts to be priced? Pass-through with an adder?

A: Please see Note 1 on the financial proposal form (Attachment B-2). *Note 1: Approved labor rates for Subject Matter Experts may be lower than or equal to, but cannot exceed, the NTE value of \$500.00/hour during the course of the Contract. The addition of Subject Matter Experts will be considered on a case by case basis and must be individually preapproved by the State Contract Monitor. Any handling fees applied by*

the Contactor, will be pre-approved by the State Contract Monitor. Handling fees shall not exceed 6%.

Q: Also concerning part K of Appendix B-1, the State Contract Monitor will preapprove Subject Matter Experts on a case-by-case basis. How does this work? Do we include Subject Matter Experts in our offer and then wait for the Contract Monitor to consider whether they should be approved or not?

A: The Offeror should provide a best estimate of the number of SME hours that the study will require. In addition, and at a minimum, the types of SMEs that may be required and their importance to achieving the scope of work should be identified in the technical proposal. Specific SMEs may also be identified in the technical proposal. For the winning bidder, those SMEs that were specifically identified in the technical proposal will become part of the original contract; the PPRP Contract Monitor will work with the Contractor to preapprove the SME rate (subject to Attachment B-1, Item K) prior to executing the contract. For those SMEs that were not identified in the Offeror's technical proposal, the PPRP Contract Monitor and the Contractor will work together to add the SMEs, as needed and subject to Attachment B-1 (#K), to the technical team.

Q: Are the authors of the reports that will feed into the RPS Study, such as the *Renewable Inventory Report Update – 2017*, eligible to bid?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there a deadline for question submittal?

A: There is no mandated deadline for question submittals; however, PPRP will need 48 hours to respond to questions.

Q: Does a team member's title (on his or her resume) need to match the labor categories identified within Section 2 of the RFP?

A: No, however the individual's resume information (e.g., years of experience) must match the requirements specified for each labor category in Section 2.

Q: Can an MBE bid as a prime?

A: Yes. If the prime is an MBE, it can complete 50% of the MBE goal. In this case 4.5% and another MBE vendor(s) must be contracted to perform the other 4.5%.

Q: How is the MBE goal (percentage = 9%) divided among the MBEs within an Offeror's bid?

A: The division of the goal among various MBEs (to equal or exceed 9%) will be a determination made between the individual MBE and the Offeror.

Questions and Answers (as of October 31, 2017)

Q: This question concerns the answers given to questions that were submitted by October 26th. On p. 9 of the RFP, the contractor is directed to assess "alternative models of regulation and market-based tools...to promote the goals of the RPS and energy policies of the State. A question was asked whether alternative models included non-RPS policies such as systems benefit charges or state tax incentives? Or just different state RPS policies? The answer that was given in writing is yes, policy instruments such as system benefits charges and state tax incentives are to be considered, in addition to other state RPS policies. This is different than the answer that was given verbally at the bidders' conference, which was that only other state RPS policies should be considered. Which answer should we consider?

A: The correct answer is provided in the written response to questions posted on the PPRP website, which is as follows: Item #5 on p. 9, states that the Contractor will include in its review "an assessment of alternative models of regulation and market-based tools that may be available or advisable to promote the goals of the RPS and the energy policies of the State." For purposes of the solicitation, the Offeror should assume that "alternative models of regulation and market-based tools" include market-based instruments and complementary policies, such as system benefit charges or state tax incentives, as well as assessing other state RPS policies, such as centralized procurement of renewable energy as practiced in Illinois and in New York. Thank you for bringing this to our attention. PPRP will alert the other bidders by email of this misunderstanding so that the understanding of the requirements used in the response to this RFP remain consistent.

Q: Regarding the Offeror Minimum Qualifications listed on page 7, does the five years of experience need to be work performed directly with the state government agencies (i.e: under contract)?

A: No, the Offeror does not have to demonstrate work performed directly (under contract) with the State. Section 1 of the RFP states that the Offeror "shall have a minimum of 5 years of experience in the field of energy economics and in working with state government agencies in

renewable energy policy analysis, planning and implementation” (underline added for emphasis). Please also note that the RFP does not say that the state government agency has to be a Maryland state government agency.

Q: A similar question would be: If the Offeror complies with the requirements of Section 5.4.2.6 through 5.4.2.9 without any current or prior state contracts (Section 5.4.2.10), do they meet the minimum requirements of Section 1?

A: Yes.

Q: Will this be a time and materials contract, or a fixed price contract?

A: The contract will be a time and materials contract.

Q: If firm fixed price, what is the arrangements with invoices?

A: N/A; the contract resulting from this solicitation will be a time and materials contract.

Q: If this is a time and materials contract, then are you locked into using the hourly rates specified on the Financial Proposal Form? Or are those rates for evaluation purposes only?

A: Each labor category rate specified in the financial proposal form is the actual price per unit (labor hour) the State will pay for the specific item or service identified in this RFP.

Q: If bidders are supposed to enter only hours on the financial proposal form, please explain Items B and C of Attachment B on p. 46. Item B states “All Unit Prices must be the actual price per unit the State will pay for the specific item or service identified in this RFP...”, while Item C states that “All United and Extended Prices must be clearly entered in dollars and cents, e.g., \$24.15.

A: Items B, C and D do not apply to the Offeror’s filling out financial proposal form. The Offeror is to only enter labor hours on the form.

Q: To be absolutely clear, the hourly labor category rates on the Financial Proposal Form (B-2) are NOT to be modified.

A: No, the labor category rates are NOT to be modified. Offerors must use the financial proposal form (Excel spreadsheet) provided with the RFP. It is a protected spreadsheet. Only labor hours can be entered on the sheet.

Q: Appendix B-1 discusses how to prepare the financial proposal and states only the number of hours by labor category is to be entered into the Excel spreadsheet that is provided. However, provision B of Appendix B-1 says, “all unit prices must be the actual price per unit the State will pay for the specific item or service identified in this RFP and may not be contingent on any other factor or condition in any manner.” This provision sounds like the State wants a price, such as a fixed price, not labor hours. Which is it—provide only the labor hours or provide a price for doing the work?

A: The Offeror shall provide only the labor hours.