



# MOBILE BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

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Questions that have been received in writing are answered below:

Question: How much funding is available for the project?

Answer: The Mobile Bay National Estuary Program has currently budgeted \$100,000 for development of a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. It is our understanding that such conceptual plans have been developed for other watersheds on similar budgets. Prospective submitters may wish to consider potential long term advantages noted in the RFQ in their decision to submit qualifications.

Question: The RFQ states that responses are sought from experienced planners and developers of large scale environmental planning and construction firms. What constitutes “large scale”?

Answer: The size of the watersheds in question total approximately 15 square miles. Evidence of planning or design for areas that encompass such size or larger would be presumed to meet the criteria of “large scale”. However, it is recognized that areal extent alone is an insufficient criterion to define “large scale”.

We envision that detailed design, financing, implementation and/or construction associated with any such conceptual plan will be a multi-million dollar, multi-year effort. Experience with projects of similar scope will be considered as evidence of experience as a “large scale” environmental planning and construction firm.

As noted in the RFQ Section 7: “selection of a Planner will be based on: the quality, clarity and thoroughness of the submitted Statement and its compatibility with the RFQ’s stated objectives, statements of intent, and submission requirements, plus the results of information gathered from interviews with shortlisted respondents and client reference checks. Please refer to these evaluation criteria for more information.

Question: Is teaming of different environmental and engineering firms allowed?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Are there any submittal requirements for the December 15 meeting, or is this meeting just a formality?

Answer: On November 21, 2008, it was finally decided to shift the planned December 15 meeting to December 18. The subject meeting will be held from 9:00-11:00 on December 18, at the Five Rivers Complex in the Theatre. The Five Rivers Complex is the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources facility on the Causeway in Spanish Fort, AL. This change will be posted on the MBNEP website and provided to those firms identifying themselves as wishing to receive updates on the RFQ process.

This December 18, 2008 meeting is an opportunity for the MBNEP to present certain relevant information to potential responders and answer any questions that they may have in a public forum. There is no requirement for pre-submittal of questions or other documentation. Notice of your intent to attend however, would be appreciated.

Question: At the pre-submittal conference a question was asked about the 'Financial Capability' requirements for the proposal. As I recall, the answer was that this section was taken from an RFP from Maryland where project funding had not been secured, and this section was relative to the Planner's ability to secure funds and work with the state and federal legislative processes to justify fund allocations. How do commercial bank and financial partner references dovetail into that requirement? Also, are the audited financial statements independent from the previous items that relate to the ability to identify and secure funds?

Answer: There are two primary considerations being addressed in section 6 E. of the RFQ. One consideration is our requirement that some demonstration be made of experience that a planning/engineering firm may have relative to securing or developing funding for such a public project including working within existing federal and state legislative processes and/or using State Revolving Fund Loans, developing bond issue proposals etc. that might be used for financing. Items 1 and 2 in this section are primarily directed to that consideration. The second consideration is the financial health, solvency and long term capabilities of any planning/engineering firm that might be selected to carry out such an extensive project. Items 3-5 in Section 6.E of the RFQ address this consideration. For your information **Section 6.E Financial Capability** is re-stated below:

*“E. Financial Capability – Given the complex nature of the Project, the Evaluation Team and MBNEP must understand the Planner’s financial capability to undertake and successfully complete the Project. 1. Describe the Project Team’s experience (if any) in obtaining private equity and debt for public/private developments similar in scale. 2. Indicate the source(s) of both debt and equity financing for each reference project stated above, and describe the Respondent’s commitment and capability to provide capital for this Project. 3. Indicate the amount of immediately available financial resources to fund the costs associated with negotiation of development agreements, obtaining entitlements and other approvals, and other pre-development activities. 4. Please provide the names and phone numbers of two commercial bank references, and two financial partner references. 5. Under separate cover and marked ‘confidential’, provide a most recent audited financial statement of the respondent and principal participants in the business entity proposing this project.”*

Question: *Section 6: Submittal Instructions and Content* indicates that “Respondents to the RFQ should limit their submission to no more than 20 pages, excluding illustrative materials explaining planner’s ability and experience to develop the proposed concept. All proprietary information should be identified as such by the respondent. “Does this 20 page limit include “Resumes of Key Project Personnel” noted in section 6.C.3?”

Answer: No. We are considering such resumes as “illustrative material” as discussed in this section.

Question: Has the schedule for submission/award etc. contained in the RFQ changed\*?

Answer: Yes. The schedule, including certain milestone dates, has changed. The revised dates were provided in the Pre-Proposal Meeting on December 18. Those dates are re-stated here:

- *Solicitation Issue/Advertising Date*                      *November 7, 2008*
- *Pre-Submittal Conference*                                      *December 18, 2008*
- *Statement Inquiry Deadline*                                      *January 15, 2009*

- *Award Exclusive Negotiating Right*      *April 30, 2009*
- *Public education and Outreach*      *October 2008-January 2010*
- *Delivery of CWMP*      *February 2010*

*\*As previously noted this schedule is subject to change (except for “Statement Receipt Closing Date”). This date must remain fixed to ensure a level playing field for all proposers. Any further changes will be posted on the website.*

Question: On page 16 under “Contents” it states:

*The information should be presented in 8.5” X 11” size and should have tabs keyed to the requirements outlined in this Section.*

and:

*Statements must include the following to be deemed responsive for evaluation: [for the following items (6A-E, please refer to Section 7 for the evaluation criteria that correspond to the following submittal items)]:*

However Section 7 has pieces that do not correspond (section 6 is actually missing the letter “D”). Under E, Section 6 asks for *Financial Capability*, whereas Section 7 asks for *Financial Capacity*.

Could you please clarify that following the Evaluation Criteria as laid out in Section 7 is the correct response, and that the statement should be tabbed accordingly?

Answer: “Statements must include the following to be deemed responsive for evaluation: [for the following items (6A-E, please refer to Section 7 for the evaluation criteria that correspond to the following submittal items)]:

In describing the evaluation criteria, Section 7 provides a summary of the more detailed requirements in Section 6. Accordingly, the preference is for the response to be as outlined in Sec. 6 A-E, (the reference to section 7 to be used as amplifying information regarding these sections) However since we have discovered an error in Section 6 of the RFQ. Paragraph 6.D (which would have corresponded Section 7 D.) was inadvertently omitted. Accordingly responses that follow the format of either Section 6 or 7 (and are tabbed accordingly) will be deemed to be responsive for evaluation and considered without penalty . However, other relevant content described in Section 6 must be addressed in the submission whichever format is used.

The terms “Financial Capability” (Section 6) and “Financial Capacity” (Section 7) should have been consistent and were intended to be used without distinction.