

National Renewable Energy Laboratory  
Request for Proposals Number RCE-8-88655

“Scientific and Business Information Technology Services and Support”

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

READ THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY

This solicitation is being conducted under the procedures for competitive subcontracts established by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

**NREL will award a subcontract based on the following:**

- All Statement of Work (SOW) requirements being met
- The best combination of:
  - Technical factors (based on qualitative merit criteria)
  - and
  - Evaluated price (or cost)

Issue Date: 09/17/08

Due Date: Friday 10/24/08

Time Due: 4:00 p.m. Mountain Time

**Technical Questions must be received in writing no later than Tuesday 09/30/08**

1. **Solicitation Type**
  - Best Value Selection
  - Labor Hour – Work Order Process
  - Partial Small Business Set Aside

*Submit offers to and request information from the NREL RFP Contact below*

2. **NREL RFP Contact:**
  - Carol Johnston, Sr. Subcontract Administrator
  - MS 1533
  - National Renewable Energy Laboratory
  - 1617 Cole Boulevard
  - Golden, CO 80401-3393
  
  - Email: [carol\\_johnston@nrel.gov](mailto:carol_johnston@nrel.gov)

**Electronic (PDF) copies of forms and appendices can be found at:**  
[http://www.nrel.gov/business\\_opportunities/related\\_docs.html](http://www.nrel.gov/business_opportunities/related_docs.html)

### **3. Project description**

As specified in the Statement of Work (see NREL RFP link referenced at item 12 below).

### **4. Proposed subcontract award and period of performance**

It is the intent of NREL to award up to five Labor Hour subcontracts under this solicitation. The anticipated period of performance is a base period of 12 months with one 12-month option period, and funding availability of approximately \$900,000.00 per subcontract, per 12-month period.

Notice of Partial Small Business Set-Aside:

A “small business concern,” as used in this solicitation, means a concern, including its affiliates that is independently owned and operated, not dominant in the field of operation in which it is bidding on Government contracts, and is qualified as a small business under the size standards in this solicitation.

A minimum of 50%\* of this requirement has been set aside for award to small business concerns.

\* This percent is based on the total of the ceiling amounts of subcontracts awarded as a result of this solicitation.

### **5. Competitive negotiated subcontract using Best Value Selection**

This solicitation shall be conducted using Best Value Selection that results in an award that is most advantageous to NREL based on the best value combination of (a) evaluated qualitative merit and (b) evaluated price (cost) of the offers submitted.

Best Value Selection is based on the premise that, if all offers are of approximately equal qualitative merit, award will be made to the offeror with the lowest evaluated price (cost). However, NREL will consider awarding to an offeror with a higher evaluated price (cost) if the offer demonstrates the difference in price (cost) is commensurate with the higher qualitative merit. Conversely, NREL will consider awarding to an offeror with a lower evaluated qualitative merit if the price (cost) differential between it and other offers warrant doing so.

### **6. Qualitative merit criteria for Best Value Selection**

The Statement of Work (see NREL RFP link at item 12) in this Request for Proposals serves as NREL’s baseline requirements that must be met by each offer.

The qualitative merit criteria establish what NREL considers the technical factors valuable in an offer. These qualitative merit criteria are performance-based and permit selection of a higher priced offer that provides higher qualitative merit.

The following qualitative merit criteria will be used by evaluators to determine the technical value of the offer in meeting the objectives of the solicitation.

Each qualitative merit criteria and its assigned weight are provided below.

## **6.1 Technical Factors as follows: (20%)**

- **Technical Approach**

Describe the specific approach and technical capability to recruit people with the skill sets detailed in the Statement of Work.

Provide two (2) recent staffing samples. Each sample must include the following information:

- The level of expertise of personnel, and
- The hourly cost estimate for described personnel.

Also, the skill sets/personnel proposed under **Exhibit III** for each of the Sample Work Orders shown in Exhibit II will be evaluated as a technical approach factor.

- **Understanding the Requirement**

The offeror shall demonstrate, in a narrative description, its overall understanding of the SOW and how its corporate/company mission relates to NREL's requirements.

## **6.2 Project Management Factors as follows: (40%)**

- **Project Management Approach**

Provide a detailed discussion of your approach to the management of Subcontractor's personnel that would be working at NREL, as well as techniques that demonstrate how the work requirements are proposed to be met. Also, demonstrate how your organization will be prepared to respond promptly to problems or issues arising under the subcontract.

- **Staffing Plan**

Describe the proposed staffing plan, including the average amount of time it will take to provide staff for work order requirements. Explain how labor resources are identified, and provide information on recruiting efforts and turnover rates, as well as the estimated timeframe for completing background checks.

## **6.3 Corporate Experience (20%)**

Describe prior corporate experience that demonstrates the Offeror's ability to perform tasks similar to those required in the Statement of Work.

## **6.4 Past Performance (20%)**

Provide a list of current and past contracts for the same or similar work being requested in this requirement. Please provide the name of the organization/company, point of contact (including phone number and email address), contract title, dollar value, dates, and a brief description of how the referenced contract relates to these requirements. Identify and provide a synopsis/description of at least three (3) past/current contracts, or if previous contracts are not available, provide an explanation. If no past performance is available, the Offeror will be given neutral (may not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably) value for this criteria. By providing these references, the Offeror authorizes NREL to contact them.

## 7. Hourly Labor Rate Ranges and Sample Work Orders

### 7.1 Hourly Labor Rate Ranges

Identify four (4) separate fully burdened hourly price ranges. From the lowest level skill sets to the highest level skill sets, assign each of the skill sets shown in **Exhibit I** (found at the NREL RFP link referenced at item 12 below) to one of the four ranges.

Note: An offeror may use three ranges instead of the four provided in Exhibit I if its organization is structured accordingly. Also, the titles of “Junior”, “Mid”, and “Senior” may be added to a skill set, if appropriate.

### 7.2 Sample Work Orders

The offeror shall analyze the work requirements for each of the Sample Work Orders (**Exhibit II**) found at the NREL RFP link referenced at item 12. The sample work orders include work efforts described in the Statement of Work and similar types of work that may be assigned under the resultant subcontracts. The offeror shall propose the skill sets/personnel necessary to successfully perform each sample work order. The hourly rate for each skill set/personnel identified shall be included, as well as its range. Complete a **Sample Work Order Proposal** for each of the work order samples using **Exhibit III** (found at the NREL RFP link referenced at item 12).

## 8. Price (cost) evaluation for Best Value Selection

After evaluation of the qualitative merit criteria, the following price (cost) evaluation will be used to determine the best value of the offer in meeting the objectives of the solicitation.

The combined qualitative merit value will be considered equally important to the price (cost), as represented by the Hourly Labor Rate Ranges Proposal and Sample Work Order Proposals.

## 9. Evaluation process

NREL will evaluate offers in two general steps:

### Step One—Initial Evaluation

An initial evaluation will be performed to determine if all required information has been provided for an acceptable offer. Offerors may be contacted only for clarification purposes during the initial evaluation. Offerors shall be notified if their offer is determined unacceptable and the reasons for rejection will be provided. Unacceptable offers will be excluded from further consideration.

### Step Two—Discussion, Selection, Negotiation, and Award

All acceptable offers will be evaluated against the Statement of Work (see NREL RFP link at item 12) and the qualitative merit criteria listed above. Based on this evaluation, NREL has the option, depending on the specific circumstances of the offers received, to use one of the following methods of selection:

- (a) make an individual selection, conduct negotiations, and make an award;
- (b) conduct parallel negotiations with all offerors and make award(s);
- (c) conduct discussions with all offerors, select successful finalists, conduct parallel negotiations with successful finalists, and then make award(s);

- (d) conduct discussions with all offerors, conduct parallel negotiations with the finalists, select successful finalist(s), and then make award(s);
- (e) select successful finalists, conduct successive negotiations, and make successive selections and awards;
- (f) make no award(s).

## 10. Proposal preparation information

- a. The proposal must include a title page, including the RFP title and number, name of your organization and who the project manager is (with postal address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address). The title should be succinct and capture the essence of your offer.
- b. Formatting instructions
  - A page is defined as one side of an 8 ½” x 11” sheet of paper.
  - Use a 12-point font.
  - Maintain at least 1-inch margins on all sides.
  - Copies may be either single or double sided.
- c. A **technical proposal** in an original and six (6) copies directed toward meeting the requirements of NREL’s Statement of Work (see NREL RFP link at item 12) and qualitative merit criteria (see item 6 above). The technical proposal shall be organized in the following sections:
  - I. Executive Summary (background and overview of the Offeror’s organization, including the type of business it is, i.e. large business, small business, woman-owned business, small disadvantaged business, small minority-owned business, veteran-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, or HUB Zone)
  - II. Technical Factors (20%) -
    - Technical Approach (with staffing samples)
    - Understanding the Requirement
  - III. Project Management Factors (40%) -
    - Project Management Approach
    - Staffing Plan
  - IV. Corporate Experience (20%)
  - V. Past Performance (20%)

The total technical proposal shall not exceed fifteen (15) pages (not including project manager/key personnel resumes or responses to Exhibits I, II, and III).

- d. An original and six (6) copies of the completed **Hourly Labor Rate Ranges Proposal** form (see Exhibit I found at the NREL RFP link at item 12). The Hourly Labor Rate Ranges Proposal must include support documentation for each proposed fully burdened labor rate.

The Hourly Labor Rate Ranges Proposal should separate labor rates for lower-tier subcontract(s), if proposed, and include support documentation for all categories of the proposed lower-tier subcontract(s) labor rates.

Please include any GSA Schedules or government pricing agreements that may apply. The Offeror’s labor rates and delivery terms must be valid for 90 days from the date

of the offer. Note: Expenses shall be unallowable and unallocable to the labor hour subcontracts.

- e. A completed “**Sample Work Order Proposals**” form (Exhibit III) in an original and six (6) copies (see NREL RFP link at item 12) for each of the three Sample Work Orders as described in Section 7.2 of this RFP. An individual offeror’s labor rate proposal standard format can be used if the data included is substantially the same as the NREL form.
- f. An original, completed, **Representations and Certifications** form (see NREL RFP link at item 12.) Note: An Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form W-9 will be submitted to NREL at the Subcontract Administrator’s request, if a subcontract is issued for award.
- g. EITHER the **Organizational Conflicts of Interest Representation Statement** OR the **Organizational Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Statement** (see NREL RFP link at item 12), as applicable.
- h. A **Cover Letter** including a **summary statement**, indicating acceptance of the proposed Statement of Work or any change with the reason(s), and a **summary of deviations/exceptions** (if any) to the subcontract schedule and the standard terms and conditions and/or the intellectual property terms and conditions in the appendices. The offeror will explain any exceptions (including deviations and conditional assumptions) taken with respect to the subcontract schedule and terms and conditions. Any exceptions must contain sufficient amplification and justification to permit evaluation. Such exceptions will not, of themselves, automatically cause an offer to be termed unacceptable. A large number of exceptions or one or more significant exceptions not providing any obvious benefit to the Department of Energy or NREL may, however, result in rejection of such offer as unacceptable.
- j. This solicitation does not allow the submittal of facsimile or electronic proposals.
- k. This solicitation does not commit NREL to pay costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal in response to this RFP.

## 11. Solicitation Provisions—full text provided

### a. Late submissions, modifications, and withdrawals of offers

Offers, or modifications to them, received from qualified organizations after the latest date specified for receipt may be considered if received prior to award, and NREL determines that there is a potential price (cost), technical, or other advantage, as compared to the other offers received. However, depending on the circumstances surrounding the late submission or modification, NREL may consider a late offer to be an indication of the offeror’s performance capabilities, resulting in downgrading of the offer by NREL evaluators in the technical evaluation process. Offers may be withdrawn by written notice or telegram (including mailgram) received at any time before award. Offers may be withdrawn in person by an offeror or an authorized representative, if the representative’s identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt for the offer before award.

**b. Restrictions on disclosure and use of data**

Offerors who include in their proposals data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the government or NREL, except for evaluation purposes shall—

1. Mark the title page with the following legend:  
“This offer includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the government or NREL and shall not be used or disclosed—in whole or in part—for any purpose other than to evaluate this offer. If, however, a subcontract is awarded to this offeror as a result of—or in connection with—the submission of this data, the government or NREL shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting subcontract. This restriction does not limit the government or NREL’s right to use information contained in this data if obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained on pages [insert page and line numbers or other identification of pages] of this offer”; and
2. Mark each page of data it wishes to restrict with the following legend:  
“Use or disclosure of data contained on this page is subject to the restriction on the title page of this offer.”

c. [Reserved]

**d. Disclaimer**

NEITHER THE UNITED STATES; NOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY; NOR MIDWEST RESEARCH INSTITUTE, NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY LABORATORY DIVISION; NOR ANY OF THEIR CONTRACTORS, SUBCONTRACTORS, OR THEIR EMPLOYEES MAKE ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, OR ASSUME ANY LEGAL LIABILITY OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY, COMPLETENESS, OR USEFULNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE OF ANY OF THE TECHNICAL INFORMATION OR DATA ATTACHED OR OTHERWISE PROVIDED HEREIN AS REFERENCE MATERIAL.

**e. Solicitation disputes**

The General Accounting Office and the Department of Energy no longer accept or rule on disputes for solicitations for Requests for Proposals issued by Management and Operating Contractors for the Department of Energy (operators of Department of Energy National Laboratories). Should an offeror have any concerns regarding the NREL solicitation process or selection determination, the offeror may contact Marty Noland, Advocate for Commercial Practices, at (303) 384-7550. NREL will address each concern received from an offeror on an individual basis.

**f. Small Business (Lower-Tier) Subcontracting Plan** (derived from FAR 52.219-9)

The following requirement does not apply to small business offerors.

If a large business is chosen for award, within ten days of notification of selection for negotiation toward award, the offeror shall submit a lower-tier subcontracting plan that separately addresses lower-tier subcontracting with small business, small disadvantaged business, and women-owned small business concerns. If the offeror is submitting an individual subcontract plan, the plan must separately address lower-tier subcontracting with small business, small disadvantaged business, and women-owned small business concerns, with a separate part for the basic subcontract and separate parts for each option (if any). The plan shall be included in and made a part of the resultant subcontract. The lower-tier subcontracting plan shall be negotiated within the time specified by the NREL Subcontract Administrator. Failure to submit and negotiate a lower-tier subcontracting plan shall make the offeror ineligible for award of a subcontract. (See NREL RFP link at item 12.)

**12. Solicitation provisions—incorporated by reference—general access**

This solicitation incorporates one or more solicitation provisions by reference with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. The following documents can be downloaded from the NREL **general access** website under “Current Solicitations/Request for Proposals” at [http://www.nrel.gov/business\\_opportunities.html](http://www.nrel.gov/business_opportunities.html) or the NREL RFP Contact (see item 2) will make full text available upon request.

- Statement of Work, dated 08/22/2008
- Sample Subcontract Schedule
  - Labor Hour – Work Order Process
- Hourly Labor Rate Ranges Proposal Form (Exhibit I)
- Sample Work Orders (Exhibit II)
- Sample Work Order Proposals – Complete for Sample Work Orders (Exhibit III)

The following documents can be downloaded from the NREL **general access** website under “Related Documents and Forms” at [http://www.nrel.gov/business\\_opportunities/related\\_docs.html](http://www.nrel.gov/business_opportunities/related_docs.html) or the NREL RFP Contact (see item 2) will make full text available upon request.

- NREL Standard Terms and Conditions:
  - Appendix B-6 (10/01/03)
- NREL Addendum to Appendix B-6 Standard Terms and Conditions:
  - Attachment 1 to Appendix B-6 (10/01/07)



- NREL Intellectual Property Provisions:
  - Appendix C-3 (10/22/98)
- NREL Terms and Conditions for Subcontracts in excess of \$500,000.00
  - Appendix D-1 (11/01/03)
- NREL Representations and Certifications for Subcontracts (05/10/2007)
- NREL Organizational Conflicts of Interest Forms
- NREL Small Business (Lower-tier) Subcontracting Plan Requirements [Not applicable to Small Businesses]

**13. NAICS Code and Small Business Size Standard**

- a. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code [formerly standard industrial classification (SIC)] for this solicitation is 541519.
- b. The small business size standard for “Other Computer Related Services” is \$23.0 million in annual receipts. (Annual receipts of a concern means the annual average gross revenue for the last three fiscal years.)