



North Carolina Rural Water and Wastewater Projects

Request For Proposals Selecting a Consultant

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SELECTING CONSULTANTS

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“Selection of the Consulting Engineer is one of the most important of the Client’s decisions during development of any engineering project. Upon the experience, skill, integrity, and judgment of the Engineer rest the cost, suitability, and structural soundness of the proposed work for its intended function. The Engineer’s decisions based on these factors affect costs that influence the economic feasibility of the entire undertaking.”

ORGANIZING TO SELECT A **CONSULTANT**

The Owner must properly prepare to select a Consultant:

First: and most important, the Owner must define what it is the Owner wants the Consultant to do. In some cases, this may be a very general statement of the performance required of the project. At the other extreme, it can be a well-detailed design program.

Second: the Owner must define the role the Consultant is to fulfill in the team that will carry out the project. Design is a process that takes a project from conception to operation.

Along the way, many steps are involved and the Consultant can fulfill a variety of functions. Also, Consultants can supply many engineering and related services other than design. Only if the Owner can clearly define the role(s) the Consultant is to fulfill, is he or she prepared to judge which Consultant is best equipped to serve his needs.

Third: the Owner needs to establish procedures and policies that will be universally applied during the selection of the Consultant. An essential ingredient in such procedures and policies is fairness. An Owner that selects a Consultant with fairness to all will build lasting relationships both with the firm selected and those not chosen. Competing for a consulting engagement is an expensive undertaking for any Consultant under any set of conditions. It is in whole (usually), or in part, an overhead cost the Consultant must recover from on-going operations. It is unfair to encourage a firm to compete if they have no chance for selection.

POLICY FOR SELECTION

The Owner should have an established policy and criteria to govern the selection of the Consultant. This policy and the related criteria may change from project to project. However, for each competition, the criteria should be established in advance of beginning the selection process and made available to all interested persons and firms.

“Some of the factors that should be considered are:

- 1.The professional and ethical reputation of the Engineer and the Engineering Firm is a prime consideration. The reputation and character of an Engineer can be determined by inquires with previous clients and by other references.
- 2.The principal and other responsible members of the firm must be Registered Professional Engineers in their state of residence, and should be qualified to obtain registration in any state in which the firm’s services are required.
- 3.The firm should have demonstrated qualifications and expertise in performing the specific services required for the project. (Consider Request for Qualifications)
- 4.The firm should be able to assign qualified staff Engineers who will be in charge of the project, and be able to complete required services within the time allotted.”

INFORMATION FOR SELECTION

- Consultants interested in an engagement will supply information about their qualifications. In addition to the specific information requested and supplied by the Consultant, the Owner can take advantage of other sources of information regarding the Consultant's credentials such as other clients and state licensing boards.
- A key information source to those seeking environmental engineers is specialty certification provided by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers. The minimum requirements for specialty certification – a formal education, a state-issued Professional Engineer's registration (license) and eight (8) years of environmental engineering experience – coupled with the examination and peer review process described elsewhere in the Environmental Engineering Selection Guide provide independent testimony regarding the Engineer's satisfaction of several of the evaluation factors recommended by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

SELECTION PROCEDURES AND **FORMS**

To achieve the objectives in retaining consulting Environmental Engineers , a systematic approach ensures the best possible result. The preferred approach includes the following steps:

- 1. Alert the consulting community to the need for assistance.**
- 2. Obtain statements of qualifications.**
- 3. Select a number of firms that appear most qualified for the particular assignment.**
- 4. Request Proposals for the specific project.**
- 5. Interview proposing firms.**
- 6. Evaluate proposals and rank proposing firms.**
- 7. Negotiate an agreement with the top ranked firm.**

- **The Pre-Qualification Phase** in this approach helps limit the number of proposers to those best –qualified for the assignment and avoids wasted efforts by consultants. The key information to be acquired in the qualifications phase is:
 - the credentials (education, licenses, and certifications) and experience of the project personnel who will work on the assignment and
 - the relevance of those credentials and that experience to the assignment.
 - It is the responsibility of those initiating the project to conceptually define their engineering needs in a comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP). It remains for the qualified Consulting Engineer to translate those concepts into a realistic and creative work program. Creativity in meeting the project’s needs is the consultant’s primary attribute.
 - The proposal process allows those initiating the project to assess which firm can best serve the project needs **BEFORE** the Consultant is selected and a contract negotiated. The importance of this process is evident in the realization that in capital projects, the consultant’s fee is on the order of 1% of the project’s life-cycle cost, yet the consultant has a major impact on the other 99%.
 - A model format for use in preparing an RFP is included on the following pages. This model stresses fairness to all concerned by making as clear as possible the client’s needs – technical requirements, expectations, schedule limitations, cost constraints, etc. – the nature and extent of the resources the consultant can draw upon in preparing the proposal.
 - Throughout the model format parenthetical bold face italic type is used to call attention to information to be inserted by the person preparing the RFP. An example of this convention in presentation is: **(Type of Services)**.

COVER LETTER

- (Date)
- (Name)
- (Address)
- Dear (Greeting)
- REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL – (Type of Services)
- (Project Title)
- A Request for Proposal (RFP) to provide (Type of Services) services related to the (Project Title) Project is enclosed.
- The firms receiving this RFP are as follows:
- (List Firms)
- **This RFP includes the following:**
- **Proposal Submittals – Attachment 1**
- **Project Schedule – Attachment II**
- **Scope of Work – Attachment III**
- **Selection Criteria – Attachment IV**
- **Background Documents – Attachment V**
- Proposals should be presented in accordance with the specified requirements in Attachment 1. Supplementary material such as exhibits, biographical information, and other documentation may also be submitted separately bound from the proposal.
- Six copies of the proposal must be submitted to the Engineering Division no later than (Time and Date). District staff will be available for meetings with individual firms to discuss the proposed project and answer questions. A meeting, if desired, should be scheduled through (Contact Person's Name). Proposals will be evaluated by District staff in accordance with the selection criteria specification in Attachment IV. Interviews will be conducted on (Date of Interviews). The consultant selection process will be followed by contract negotiations.
- It is expected that the selected consultant should be ready to proceed with (Type of Services) on or about (Date to Proceed with Services).
- (Include any additional information which the consultant may need to know, e.g., CEQA information)
- Questions concerning this RFP should be directed to (Contact Person) at (Telephone No.)
- Sincerely,
- (Name of Originator of RFP)
- (Title of Originator of RFP)
- Attachments

ATTACHMENT 1

PROPOSAL SUBMITTALS

- **A. PROPOSAL FORMAT**
- The proposal is required to contain the following information and should be (Limit Number of Pages Desirable) pages (excluding cover, title sheets, dividers, etc.)
- **SECTION 1- Approach**
- Provide an approach for completing the Scope of Work for (Type of Services). (See Attachment III).
- Present Project review and quality assurance program.
- Discuss any unique ideas/concerns relating to the project.
- **SECTION 2- Project Organization**
- Lead firm (or firms in the case of joint ventures)
 - **Name(s)**
 - **Address(es)**
 - **Telephone number(s)**
 - **Name of responsible corporate officer(s)**
 - **Office location where the majority of the day-to-day work will be accomplished**
- Subcontractors
 - **Name(s)**
 - **Address(es)**
 - **Telephone number(s)**
 - **Name of responsible corporate officer(s)**
 - **Office location where work will be performed**
- Organization Chart
- Brief description of responsibilities and summary resumes of key professional personnel emphasizing experience directly relating to responsibilities on this project, as well as any specialty certification (e.g., American Academy of Environmental Engineers, American Board of Industrial Hygiene, etc.), which demonstrates special qualifications related to this project.
- Estimated amount of time each key person will devote to the work on this project.
- Indicate which team members will participate in each area of the work.
- **SECTION 3 – Schedule**
- Work schedule for tasks described in Attachment II and Approach. Include expected starting dates and completion dates referenced to Notice to Proceed. State assumptions for time requirements.
- **SECTION 4 – Personnel Effort**
- An estimate of the required personnel hours, by task and job title, for performing (Type of Services).

PROPOSAL SUBMITTALS (CONTINUED)

- **SECTION 5 – Management Control Program**
- Cost control method/system.
- Schedule control method/system
- Proposed project status reporting system.

- **SECTION 6 – Experience and References**
- Project Manager – Brief description of not more than five (5) projects similar to the work to be undertaken within the last five (5) years performed by the proposed project manager.
- Project Engineer – Brief description of not more than five (5) projects similar to the work to be undertaken within the last five (5) years performed by the proposed project Engineer(s).
- Name, address, and telephone number of references for each of the projects described above.

- **B. APPENDIX (As Needed)**

ATTACHMENT II

PROJECT SCHEDULE

- | <u>Task</u> | <u>Estimated Schedule</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Consultant Selection | Date |
| • Consultant Notice to Proceed | Date |
| • Project Milestones | Dates |
| • (List Milestones) | (Dates for each Milestone) |

ATTACHMENT III

SCOPE OF WORK

- The general scope of work is described in this section. A final scope of work will be defined in the contract negotiation process.
- The scope of work is for (*complete simple sentence description*):
- The owner will provide the following services related to the project:
- (*List services and information provided to the Engineer.*):
- Following is a brief description of the scope of work:
- (*Describe the services the Engineer is to provide using the most specificity possible*

ATTACHMENT IV

SELECTION CRITERIA

(Change Percentages as Needed)

Selection of the Consultant(s) will be based on both the proposal and interview. The proposal is weighed 50 percent, the interview 50 percent.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria (50 Percent of Total Score)

1. Specialized Experience of Firm (15 Percent)

This includes specialized experience directly relating to these projects, demonstrated ability to complete the work within the required schedule and budget, quality control/assurance programs, and the dept of in-house and subcontractor support.

2. Project Personnel (55 Percent)

This includes the role, commitment, and qualifications (including possession of applicable licenses and certifications) of key personnel and their experience in the areas assigned.

- Principal-In-Charge 10 Percent**
- Project Manager 30 Percent**
- Project Engineer 15 Percent**

3. Approach to Work (20 Percent)

This includes the approach to the project scope outlined in Attachment III, the understanding of the project scope and schedule of work, and the interfacing of tasks.

4. Other Consideration (10 Percent)

This includes comments received from references and unique/creative approaches to work.

Selection Criteria(continued)

- **Interview Evaluation Criteria (50 Percent of Total Score)**

- **Presentation (20 Percent)**

- Style
- Content
- Ability to meet time constraints
- Effectiveness
- Communication/presentation skills

- **Questions and Answers (50 Percent)**

- Questions will be both technical and managerial in nature.
- Technical experience
- Managerial experience
- Creativity
- Community skills

- **Project Team (30 Percent)**

- Principal-In-Charge
- Project Manager
- Project Engineer
- Inspectors

ATTACHMENT V

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- (List the background documents that will be made available to the Engineer in preparing the proposal and how they will be made available.)