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Professional Services Request for Proposals RFP: 17-667-2060-0033 Mapping and Classification of Wetlands in New Mexico Questions and Answers

The following are the questions and answers to all questions submitted regarding RFP #17-667-2060-0033 submitted through May 3, 2017:

1. Can you please provide guidance for finding the RFP on the New Mexico Environment Department Surface Water Quality Bureau website?

Since the RFP was uploaded to the Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) website, the home page was updated and the link has changed position on the new home page. Scroll down to the Watershed Protection Section under "What's New?" Click on "RFP for Mapping and Classification of Wetlands in New Mexico," and you will be connected to the RFP PDF.

2. Our firm recently learned of the recently advertised RFP to provide wetland mapping and classification services to the New Mexico Environmental Department and wished to submit our Acknowledgement of Receipt Form so we could receive updates and additional information regarding this project. We realize that the date for the submission of this form has just recently passed, but we are hoping to still be included in the list of potential vendors as this project was only recently published and our team is highly skilled in the techniques and experience required for this project. Please let us know if this is acceptable. We will respectfully comply with your decision.

Thank you for your Acknowledgement of Receipt. While you have missed the deadline to directly receive Answers to Written Questions and Amendments, they will be posted on the SWQB website at <http://www.env.nm.gov/requests-for-proposals/> by May 5, 2017. You can still submit a proposal and it will get full consideration but the proposal deadline will be strictly adhered to.

3. Section I. C. 3a Pg. 3-4 - Does a reduced consulting rate (hourly rate) qualify for meeting the non-federal match? Meaning donate an in-kind match of the difference between normal consulting rates and reduced consulting rates?

Yes, a reduced consulting hourly rate qualifies for meeting the non-federal match so long as the difference is not made up from a federally funded source. For example, if the normal pay rate is \$60.00/hour and the reduced rate for this project is \$45.00/hour, then the difference

could be claimed as non-federal match. Using the reduced rate, the offeror must show evidence of the normally charged fair market value rate. The offeror must show how that reduction is calculated in the explanation of match as required under IV D 2 (page 32) and on Cost Response Form in Appendix D (pages 57 and 58).

Note that the fair market value rate cannot exceed the EPA Contractor rate:

Consultant Cap

EPA participation in the salary rate (excluding overhead) paid to individual consultants retained by recipients or by a recipient's contractors or subcontractors shall be limited to the maximum daily rate for a Level IV of the Executive Schedule, available at:

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>, to be adjusted annually. This limit applies to consultation services of designated individuals with specialized skills who are paid at a daily or hourly rate. This rate does not include transportation and subsistence costs for travel performed (the recipient will pay these in accordance with their normal travel reimbursement practices).

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-03/documents/epa_general_terms_and_conditions_effective_march_29_2016_or_later.pdf

More specifically, the Executive Schedule is at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2016/executive-senior-level>. Level IV of the Executive Schedule is \$160,300 per year (\$616.53 per day or \$77.06 per hour).

4. Section IV. A. 1b. Pg 28 - Is the Contractor required to develop an FTP site for the project, or can they utilize other cloud-based file sharing solutions?

The object of the FTP site is to share large data files. Cloud-based file sharing solutions are also acceptable.

5. Section IV. A. 1b. Pg 28 - If the purchase of data is required for the project, will the NMED be responsible for acquiring and paying for the data?

The most current NAIP Imagery is available free to the public. Additional imagery may be county mosaics, hydric soils data, national hydrologic dataset and other reference material in the latest version. Additional imagery that is needed for the project and is not available free to the public would be part of the cost to the contractor.

6. Section IV. A. 1g. Pg. 30 - Is all ground truthing to be conducted in the pre-determined meetings of the Mapping Advisory Committee or is the contractor expected to complete periodic ground truthing efforts on their own throughout the process?

Participants in the preliminary ground-truthing trip may include, the NMED Wetlands Project Officer, NMED Wetlands Program Coordinator, USFWS Wetlands/NWI representative, and the contractor. The field visit to representative sites in the project area is conducted to verify the draft classifications developed by the contractor and mapping signatures. The first Mapping Advisory Committee meeting is conducted so that the contractor can present the project to local stakeholders and wetland experts and, also obtain information about wetlands in the project area (such as frequency of flooding, etc.) from the Committee members that will help the contractor make mapping calls. After delineation and classification is

completed, NMED staff and the contractor review areas that are mapped, and visit questionable areas selected by the contractor and NMED. Additional ground truthing can be accomplished by the contractor on their own and not necessarily at the time of the Mapping Advisory Committee meetings, so long as a ground-truthing report of that trip is provided to NMED that includes, sites visited, data taken and representative maps and mapping units verified during the trip.

7. Section IV. A. 1h. Pg. 30 - What is the expectation for “interactive PDF”. Would an online ESRI Viewer using ArcGIS Online be an acceptable alternative?

NMED is requesting a Story Map or comparable product so that additional supporting information about New Mexico wetlands can be included. Because of the size, elevational differences, topography and other geographical differences across the state, providing supporting information about a mapped subproject area would provide added value to the maps, mapping classifications and potential uses by agencies, non-governmental entities, the scientific community and the public. NMED expects to host the product in-house. A product that would require ongoing purchase of hosting services may not be feasible.

8. [Not contained within RFP] Is it possible to download examples of the NWI, landscape level assessment and story map for areas that have already been completed for New Mexico?

Included as an attachment to these Questions and Answers is an example of mapping in one of the completed project areas. A Story Map has not been created by NMED for any of the mapped areas in New Mexico. The offeror and SWQB Wetlands Program staff will choose the content and visuals for the Story Map and the offeror will create the product.

9. [I.C.3b.1 – Introduction/Scope of Procurement/Other Considerations/#1, Page 4] “Quadrangles with extensive wetlands”. How are “extensive wetlands” defined and how will the quadrangles be separated into ones with “extensive wetlands” and ones with “few wetlands and little wetland area”?

It is estimated that New Mexico wetlands cover between 1 and 2% of New Mexico’s land area. While overall that is about 1 million acres of wetlands in New Mexico, there are areas such as high mountain areas where wetlands are more concentrated, and lowland southern plains areas where little wetland acreage exists. In the areas where there are more wetlands, applying the multiple classifications will likely take more time and resources compared to areas that have very few or no wetlands. Extensive Wetlands is defined as a quadrangle area with 15% or greater land area with wetlands or the offeror can determine at what percentage of a quadrangle more resources are required to complete the classifications and applying the functional correlation. Quadrangles in principally dry areas will likely have less than 15% of the land containing wetland resources at a scale that can be mapped using remote sensing techniques. However, the offeror should check these areas for mappable wetlands. Note that mapping wetlands for this project includes linear wetland features as well as wetland polygons. The offeror can explain his reasoning for a cost estimate by quadrangle on Part D Narrative Cost Response of Appendix D Cost Response Form (page 58).

10. [I.C.3b.4 – Introduction/Scope of Procurement/Other Considerations/#4, Page 4] Unclear as to what the extent is for this cost estimate. It sounds like the cost estimate is for “partial quadrangles” and edge matching with prior projects.

a. Is it possible to be more specific as to the spatial extent for these partial quadrangles?

There are partial quadrangles adjacent to tribal lands where the tribal lands have not been previously mapped. There are also partial quadrangles specifically on Navajo tribal lands that have been mapped for NWI by the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency and edge matching will be necessary. The offeror can provide a cost estimate for each of these scenarios by adding an a. and b. scenario under Quadrangle Criteria 4 of Part B Cost Response by USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle (page 56), and explain their rationale in Part D Narrative Cost Response (page 58) of Appendix D Cost Response Form. If the offeror wants to create additional scenarios based on spatial extent, he may do so. The offeror may treat it similarly to extensive versus little or no wetlands

b. If it is for a partial quadrangle, can you put a percentage of the quadrangle the cost estimate would be for?

The offeror can create additional scenarios based on spatial extent. The offeror may treat it similarly to extensive ($\geq 15\%$) versus little or no wetlands ($<15\%$). The offeror can explain his reasoning for a cost estimate by quadrangle on Part D Narrative Cost Response of Appendix D Cost Response Form (page 58).

11. [I.C.3b.5 – Introduction/Scope of Procurement/Other Considerations/#5, Page 4] Unclear as to what the extent is for this cost estimate. It sounds like the cost estimate is for “checkerboard areas” and edge matching with prior projects. Is it possible to be more specific as to the spatial extent for these checkerboard areas?

The goal of the SWQB Wetlands Program is to complete all wetlands mapping in New Mexico on non-tribal lands using the classifications specified in the RFP. The cost response is requested by quadrangle so that NMED can specify by quadrangle where we would like to map next, although we will choose contiguous areas for each mapping subproject. The offeror can look at current NWI maps to see the extent of checkerboard areas mapped by Navajo Nation to determine the possibility of having to map checkerboard areas.

12. [I.C.3b – Introduction/Scope of Procurement/Other Considerations/Cost considerations, Page 4] If the proposed project area is adjacent to an existing completed project area, will edge-matching with the existing completed project area expected to be performed?

Some areas may already be mapped with recent NWI (within the last 12 years and meeting or exceeding the wetlands mapping standard of the FGDC, not 1980s vintage for example). Those areas should be edge-mapped for NWI unless there is a non-negligible discrepancy. Note that mapping wetlands for this project includes linear wetland features as well as wetland polygons, and mapping also includes mapping and classification of adjacent riparian areas using “A System for Mapping Riparian Areas in the Western United States” (USFWS

2009). For areas that have been mapped by past NMED projects as shown as completed and ongoing on the location map in the RFP, edge-matching with those completed areas is expected to be performed.

A color version of the location map is included at the end of these Questions and Answers to better illustrate the “completed”, “ongoing” and example target project areas to be mapped.

13. Can bidders submit one electronic device (i.e. thumb drive/CD/DVD) with individual files of the technical and cost proposals with their bid packages, or is it preferred to have the electronic files for each on separate media?

Separate media should be used to submit the Electronic Copy of the Technical Proposal and the Electronic Copy of the Cost Proposal.

14. The RFP states that reporting for MBE, WBE, and SBRA programs is required due to the funding for the project. Are these designations based on a specific state or EPA program, or can designations from SBA or other small business enterprise program be applicable as well?

Other programs may be applicable as well. Please provide the business designation which you fall under for a determination of reporting requirements if you are awarded a contract under this RFP.

15. For the Cost provided by Task, should costs be estimated based on what would be required for each quadrangle or for each subproject? What about the Costs per Category? In essence, should the costs per quadrangle be consistent with those provided by the Costs by Task and by Category?

The Appendix D Cost Response Form is for the Evaluation Committee to determine and evaluate expected costs for the completion of a subproject. Each subproject will have a different mix of mapping scenarios that will change the cost estimates for completion of some of the Tasks.

The Offerors estimates for Tasks a, b, c, h, and i, should be straight-forward and be similarly applicable to any subproject. The Offerors estimates for Tasks d, e, f, and g will likely vary depending on the location of the subproject and mix of quadrangle types. The offeror can specify a subproject on the location map (not the completed or ongoing ones), and provide costs per task and by category using that subproject as an example. The offeror can explain his rationale for those Task costs based on quadrangle estimates for that subproject, on travel, etc., on Part D Narrative Cost Response of Appendix D Cost Response Form (page 58).

16. Figure 1. LOCATION MAP on page five indicates that locations that are marked “completed” or “ongoing” are only shown for reference. However, the figure itself is sub-titled “Wetland Mapping and Classification Projects”. Is there any difference in the anticipated level of effort for those areas marked “completed” or “ongoing”?

The color version of Figure 1. Location Map is attached to the end of these Questions and Answers for your reference. Five mapping locations are designated on the map. Two locations are “completed” and one is currently “ongoing”. Two areas in eastern New Mexico are also shown and are similar to at least two subprojects that are expected to be awarded and completed under this Request for Proposals. The level of effort to complete subprojects should be similar to the current level of effort for the completed and ongoing subprojects.

17. Section II.B.10 on page 15 states that “The contract shall be awarded to the Offeror (or Offerors) whose proposals are most advantageous...”. Could more than one contractor be selected for the entire project, perhaps based on the demarcations provided in Figure 1?

More than one offeror could be awarded taking into consideration the evaluation factors set forth in the RFP.

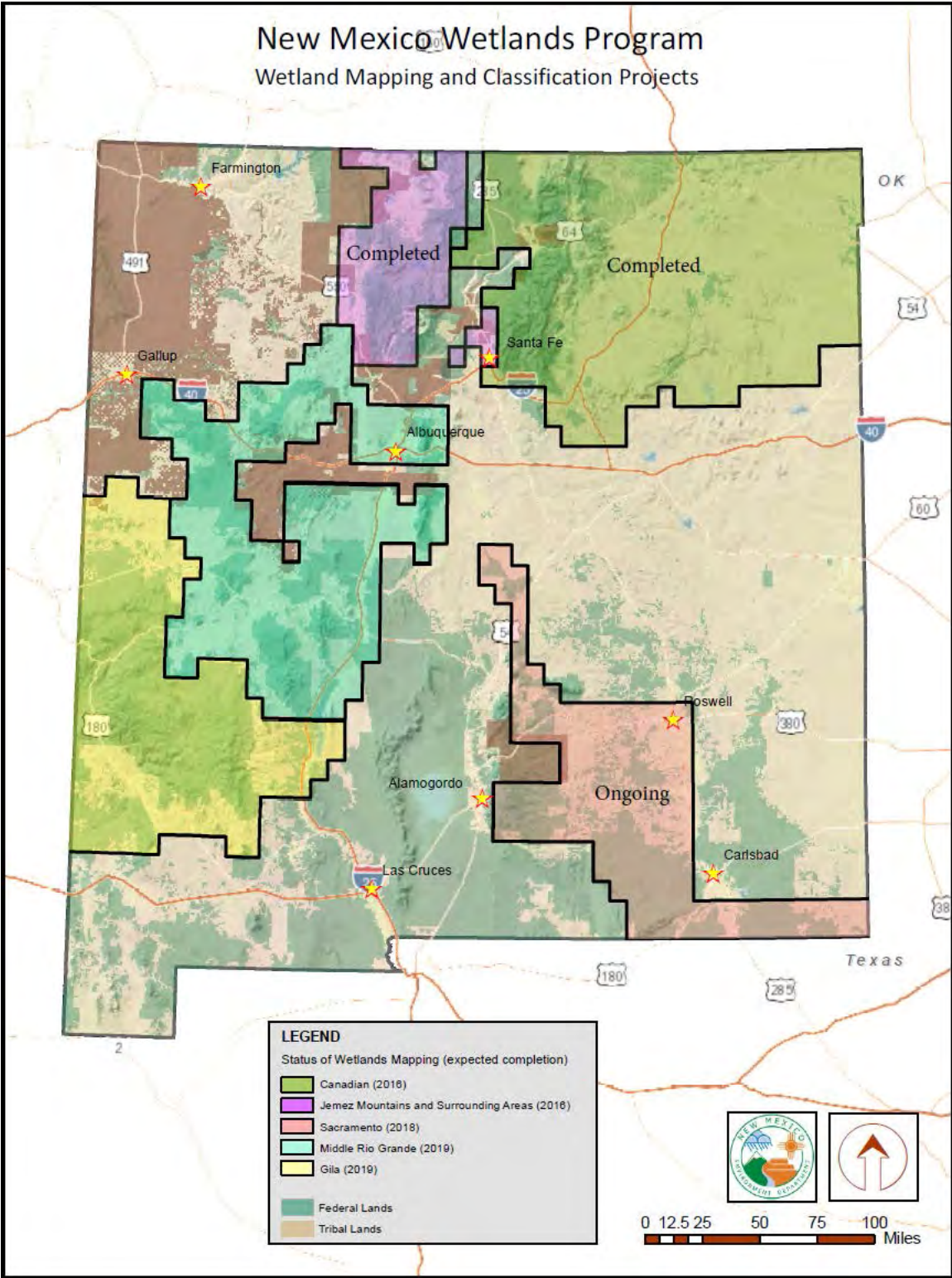


Figure 1. LOCATION MAP. This Location Map shows examples of potential subprojects. This example map is not all-inclusive nor does it limit the number or size of subprojects. The locations that are marked “completed” or “ongoing” are only shown for reference.