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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Economic Analysis of the New York–New Jersey Harbor Estuary

November 2020

NEIW PCC, in cooperation with the New York – New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP), the states of New York and New Jersey, EPA, and their partners, is inviting proposals for a study to estimate the economic value of clean water and health of the associated ecosystem in the New York – New Jersey Harbor Estuary.

The purpose of this project is to communicate the economic value of clean water in the NY–NJ Harbor Estuary to policymakers, decision makers, residents, and other stakeholders. This results of this project will provide a credible economic analysis and public facing report. This economic study will be the first of its kind in the region, and may also serve as a stepping stone for further work by governmental, non-governmental, and academic researchers.

All proposals are due to NEIW PCC by **January 6, 2021 at 12:00 PM (noon) EST**. We will gladly answer questions related to this request; to guarantee response by the RFP deadline, all questions must be submitted to Emma Gildesgame (egildesgame@neiwpsc.org) by **December 21, 2020 at 12:00 PM (noon) EST**. We anticipate notifying applicants of funding decisions by February 12, 2021. This project must be complete by May 30, 2023.

This request for proposals (RFP) includes the following sections:

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I. Overview

In consultation with the New York- New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP), EPA, and the states of New York and New Jersey, NEIWPC is conducting an economic analysis of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary.¹ The goal for this study is to estimate the economic value of clean water and associated healthy ecosystems in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary, describing both the implications for future policy and implications of inaction. The final product will be utilized by state and federal agencies, HEP, and other partners to communicate the economic importance of clean water and associated ecosystems in the Harbor Estuary to residents, policymakers and funding entities.

During the initial phases of this project, an advisory team comprised of environmental scientists, resource managers, environmental economists, and engineers from federal, regional, local, and state agencies and organizations developed the project goal and identified key water quality indicators to consider in the analysis. Additionally, an environmental economist conducted a preliminary literature review and helped develop this RFP. That initial research found no economic valuation studies specifically examining the Harbor Estuary's water quality in the existing literature (see Appendix D). Therefore, this analysis will be a first-of-its-kind, highly influential study that can draw attention to regional water quality issues and motivate future ecosystem services valuation research throughout the region.

For this analysis, we will be focusing specifically on the value of **clean water**. To meaningfully assess the economic value of ecosystem services for various stakeholders in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary, we must clearly identify the water quality parameters, management goals, and uses that define clean water. A comprehensive definition of clean water for this study must include multiple parameters. The Project Advisory Team, with input from the HEP Management Conference, has identified **enterococcus** and **dissolved oxygen** as key indicators of water quality. All proposals must include these indicators in the definition of clean water in their analysis; use of additional indicators is encouraged. A **Water Quality Index (WQI)**, could "[aggregate] information from several water quality parameters"² effectively for this project and allow for direct comparison with EPA valuations of surface water quality.

The Harbor Estuary is a large and diverse ecosystem; conditions can be quite different in the main harbor and in the smaller tributaries. Though not required as part of this RFP, it may be helpful to consider this variation in the analysis. HEP divides the estuary into ten geographic regions for planning purposes. A map of these regions is available in Appendix E. The upcoming HEP Water Quality Report, anticipated early 2021, will include compiled water quality data for the Estuary and these ten regions.

¹This area is defined as the portion of the larger Hudson-Raritan estuary south of the Mario Cuomo (Tappan Zee) Bridge including New York City and Rockland, Westchester, Bergen, Hudson, Union, Passaic, Essex, Union, Somerset, Middlesex, and Monmouth Counties. Map available at: <https://www.hudsonriver.org/estuary-program> and in Appendix E of this document.

² Walsh, Patrick J., and William J. Wheeler. "Water Quality Indices and Benefit-Cost Analysis." *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis* 4, no. 1 (March 28, 2013): 81-105. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jbca-2012-0005>.

NEIWPCC

NEIWPCC is a regional commission that helps the states of the Northeast preserve and advance water quality. We engage and convene water quality professionals and other interested parties from New England and New York to collaborate on water, wastewater, and environmental science challenges across shared regions, ecosystems, and areas of expertise. Our mission is to advance clean water in the Northeast through collaboration with, and service to, our member states. NEIWPCC's vision is for clean and sustainable water throughout the Northeast. We base our work on the core values of leadership, collaboration, education, service, and science.

The New York New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP)

The New York - New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) brings the benefits of the Clean Water Act to the people who live, work, and recreate on our shared waterways. Created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at the request of the governors of New York and New Jersey, HEP is an ongoing effort to develop and implement a consensus driven plan to protect, conserve and restore the estuary. HEP decisions and activities are carried out by staff and partners organized through the committees and work groups.

II. Project Goal

The goal is to estimate the economic value of clean water and health of the associated ecosystem in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary, describing both the implications for future policy and of inaction. The proposed study shall focus, at minimum, on an estimation of recreational economic values, such as fishing, swimming, and recreational boating tied to water quality in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. For this study, water quality should be defined using multiple environmental indicators, at a minimum including enterococcus³ and dissolved oxygen as key indicators of water quality.

Additional indicators of interest to project stakeholders and with sufficient available data include but are not limited to: concentrations of toxins in sediment and/or in fish tissue and area of undeveloped shoreline habitats and tidal wetlands. For more information on potential indicators for use in this study, refer to the HEP [State of the Estuary 2018 report](#), the [EPA 304\(a\) water quality criteria](#) applicable to the Harbor Estuary, and Table 1 of Appendix D of this document.

Ideally, the proposed study would also consider other economic values associated with water quality in the region, including the estimated loss of economic value from loss of riparian habitat integrity and/or the improvement in area real estate or tourism value as a result of improved water quality.⁴ If possible, the project team is also interested in approaches which address the social components of a clean water and a healthy estuary, including equity in public access and recreation opportunities.

³ Refer to EPA's 2012 Recreational Water Quality Criteria for more information on enterococcus monitoring methods and standards: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/rwqc2012.pdf>

⁴ Refer to the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program's 2018 State of the Estuary Report for a full description of indicators of ecosystem health in the Harbor Estuary: <https://www.hudsonriver.org/NYNJHEPStateoftheEstuary.pdf>

Desired Outcome:

The project will provide a credible economic analysis that can be used by federal, state, and local organizations to communicate the economic value of clean water in the NY–NJ Harbor Estuary to the region.

III. Scope of Work

This RFP is for services to estimate the economic value of ecosystem services associated with clean water in the NY–NJ Harbor Estuary using a Benefit Function Transfer method.

This analysis will be reported in two ways, for two distinct audiences: a technical paper targeted towards professional economists and a public-facing outreach document (or series of documents) communicating the findings in a way that is meaningful and easily understood by members of the interested public, especially decision makers and representatives of funding agencies without extensive economics training.

The tasks and deliverables listed below are required for all submissions. Applicants are welcome to propose additional tasks or sub-tasks of the below in their submission, including deliverables and anticipated outcomes for each.

Task 1: Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)

Develop and submit a QAPP for the economic analysis of the NY–NJ Harbor Estuary for review and approval. See [Section IV](#) for information on NEIWPCC’s Quality Management System, including Quality Assurance & Quality Control Requirements.

QAPP development and approval can take up to four (4) months and should be incorporated into the project timeline described in [Section V](#) of this document. No additional work shall commence until the QAPP is approved.

Task 1 Deliverables

- A. Develop and submit a QAPP for the economic analysis to the NEIWPCC project manager, the NEIWPCC Quality Assurance Program Manager, and EPA QAPP officers. (Submit electronically in Microsoft Word document format.)
- B. Revise QAPP as directed by the NEIWPCC Quality Assurance Program Manager.
- C. Submit the approved QAPP to the NEIWPCC project manager in Adobe PDF format.

Task 2: Project Advisory Team Collaboration

Coordinate, conduct, and manage meetings with the NEIWPCC Project Manager, the Project Advisory Team, and the interested public as described.

A Project Advisory Team list will be provided to the contractor. The Project Advisory Team may also identify additional economic advisors to provide peer review if needed. Calls with the NEIWPCC project manager will be held routinely, on a schedule to be determined by the contractor and the NEIWPCC project manager.

Anticipated Project Meetings

Meeting Type	Purpose	Potential Participants
Initial Project Team Meeting	Discuss the project approach and establish communication between the contractor and the Project Advisory Team, including presentation of proposed environmental indicators to be used in this study.	Project Advisory Team
Initial economic review	Technical meeting with economic experts to discuss the initial results from the study and provide review and feedback.	Economic Advisors
Annotated Outline Review	Present annotated outline of the report for project manager and selected advisors input	NEIWPC project manager, select project and economic advisors
Draft report presentation	Present draft findings and reports (technical and public-facing) for feedback.	Project Advisory Team; Economic Advisors
Final economic review	Technical meeting to discuss how initial economic input was addressed in the final report.	Economic Advisors
Final report – internal presentation	Present draft final report for feedback.	Project Advisory Team
Final report – stakeholder presentations	Present final findings and share results.	Local and regional stakeholders, the interested public. (Including the HEP Citizens Advisory Committee and Management Committee)

Task 2 Deliverables

- A. Participation in all above-listed meetings and regularly scheduled project calls with the NEIWPC project manager.
- B. Preparation of meeting agendas, materials, and summaries.

Task 3: Economic Analysis

Develop a conceptual framework identifying all ecosystem services potentially affected by water quality in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. This framework should clearly show the relationships between drivers of changes in water quality, trends in indicators of water quality, and affected ecosystem services and economic values at stake for the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary.

Conduct a comprehensive survey of relevant literature identifying previous studies for the purposes of Benefit Function Transfer; create a table of studies with their respective economic values used in the current analysis to derive the transfer function. This comprehensive survey should include a summary and listing of all economic analyses done to date in the region, including those from the academic, governmental, consulting, and non-profit sectors.



Use the Benefit Function Transfer approach to estimate the economic value of ecosystem services potentially affected by water quality in the NY–NJ Harbor Estuary. At the minimum, economic value of recreational uses, such as swimming, fishing, and boating, need to be included in the estimation. Preferably, the proposed study would also include other economic values associated with poor water quality, such as the estimated loss of economic value from loss of riparian habitat integrity.

Task 3 Deliverables

- A. A comprehensive public-facing, publication-quality conceptual diagram as described above.
- B. A table of relevant studies used for the Benefit Function Transfer with respective economic values.
- C. Annotated outline and draft reports for internal review
- D. A detailed, well-cited technical report or paper estimating the economic value of ecosystem services potentially affected by water quality in the NY–NJ Harbor Estuary. The report shall discuss the derivation of the transfer function, clear citation of studies used for Benefit Transfer and any potential shortcomings of the analysis.
- E. A description of potential topics for future research, referencing the conceptual diagram (may be included in the report.)

Task 4: Participation in Economic Review Process

Present interim and final results to a panel of expert economists for review. NEIWPCC, HEP, and the project advisory team will identify and invite experts to participate in this process. Further details on this review process will be determined as the project progresses and shared with the selected contractor. The selected contractor is also welcome to submit the final paper to an academic journal or similar publication (see [Deliverables, Ownership, and Credit Due.](#))

Task 4 Deliverables

- A. Presentations to economic advisors (as listed in Task 2)
- B. Brief memo describing feedback received and how it was addressed, either as a standalone document or incorporated into final report.

Task 5: Public-facing Document(s)

Develop a report, handout, information graphic, online outreach materials, or other document to communicate the results of the economic analysis to federal, state, and local governments and non-governmental organizations and to interested residents of the Harbor Estuary watershed. The primary audience for this information will be residents, stakeholders, funders, and decision makers with interest in projects within the Harbor Estuary or its watershed. It should be assumed that this audience has little to no formal economic training. More information on the intended audience for this report will be provided to the selected contractor.

Task 5 Deliverables:

- A. Draft outreach materials developed and presented to the Project Advisory Team and HEP Committees for feedback.



- B. Final outreach materials provided in formats which will allow future editing and revisions (.docx, .pptx., .psd, .ai, Canva, etc.)

IV. General Guidelines for Applicants

Eligibility

Applicants who are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFP include: federal (non-EPA), state, or local government agencies; interstate agencies; private non-profit organizations and institutions; for-profit organizations; and academic or educational institutions. Partnerships are allowed.

Schedule

All deliverables for this project must be complete by May 30, 2023. However, it is desirable for projects to be completed earlier, if possible.

The schedule* for this RFP is as follows:

Questions due to guarantee response by RFP deadline	December 21 st , 2020, 12:00 PM EST (noon)
Proposals Due to NEIWPC	January 6 th , 2021 12:00 PM EST (noon)
Applicants Notified of Funding Decisions	February 12 th , 2021
Anticipated Project Start Date	March 1 st , 2021
Required Project End Date	May 30 th , 2023

**Schedule is subject to change*

Funding

There is **\$156,000** available for this project and it is anticipated that one successful project will be chosen. Proposals with budgets that exceed the identified funding cannot be considered. Awarded funds may be used for expenses specifically related to the proposed project, including wages and consultant fees. Expendable and non-expendable equipment directly related to the proposed project may qualify for funding, but requires pre-approval (prior to proposal submission) by NEIWPC and must be justified in the proposal. Indirect costs are allowed, but must be in line with the following procedures: Applicants with a valid Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with their cognizant federal agency must use that rate, and must provide documentation of the negotiated rate. Applicants that do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement may charge a maximum indirect rate of 10 percent of direct costs.

Deliverables

The primary deliverables for this project will be the following, as described the [Scope of Work](#):

1. **Quarterly reports** delivered to the NEIWPC project manager no later than the 10th day of January, April, July, and October during the duration of the project.
2. Approved **Quality Assurance Project Plan** as described in Task 1. See below for additional information about this deliverable.
3. Attendance at and preparation of materials for **calls and meetings** as described in Task 2



4. A detailed **technical report** or paper and all supporting materials described in Task 3.
5. **Economic review memo** as described in Task 4.
6. Final outreach materials as described in Task 5.

All deliverables are to be submitted in draft form in Microsoft Word format (or other editable format for graphics or other visual deliverables) for review by project partners and approval by the project manager (See Contact Information in [Section IX](#)). All final reports are to be delivered in Adobe .pdf format upon approval by the project manager.

Quality Assurance & Quality Control Requirements

The NEIWPC Quality Management Plan requires that Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) are developed and approved for all projects involving environmental data operations (i.e., collection, analysis, and/or manipulation of environmental data). For projects that involve environmental data operations, the contractor will be responsible for developing the project QAPP and submitting it to EPA and NEIWPC staff for review after the start of the contract period. NEIWPC will provide guidelines for QAPP development. The QAPP must be approved by the EPA, the NEIWPC Project Manager, and the NEIWPC Quality Assurance Program Manager prior to any data collection or analysis. If your proposed project will include environmental data operations, development of the QAPP can be completed as a task under this project and should be included in the proposal narrative, timeline, and budget. While preparing your proposal, please account for the additional time and resources necessary for QAPP development. Allow a minimum of 30 days for the development of your QAPP and 90 days for the review and approval of your QAPP by NEIWPC and EPA QA officers. It is appropriate for an applicant to utilize or build upon an existing, relevant, approved QAPP if one exists.

For more information about QAPPs, see <http://neiwpc.org/our-programs/assessment-and-research/quality-management/> and <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qapps.html>.

Questions regarding the QAPP process or the necessity of a QAPP for a proposed project should be directed to the NEIWPC project manager (see contact information in [Section IX](#)) by December 21, 2020 at 12:00 PM (noon) EST.

Deliverables, Ownership, and Credit Due

All materials, software, maps, studies, reports, and other products or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, produced as a result of this solicitation and funded, in whole or in part, under an agreement with NEIWPC shall be made available to NEIWPC, HEP/Hudson River Foundation, and the U.S. EPA in the formats in which it is stored or maintained. NEIWPC, HEP/Hudson River Foundation, and the U.S. EPA shall have an unrestricted right to use any materials, software, maps, studies, reports, and other products or data generated using assistance funds or specified to be delivered. The contractor shall not obtain, attempt to obtain, or file for a patent, copyright, trademark or any other interest in any such materials, software, maps, reports, and other products or data without the express, written consent of NEIWPC and subject to any other approvals required by state or federal law. Reports and other deliverables will credit NEIWPC, HEP/Hudson River Foundation, and U.S. EPA for any work completed under the grant award.

The selected contractor will retain the right to publish derivative works using data first produced from this project, provided NEIWPC and EPA are acknowledged as project funders and all required EPA disclaimers are included. Any proposed publications shall be submitted to NEIWPC for advanced review and feedback. The Contractor shall reasonably consider all input received in a timely fashion from NEIWPC.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Data Requirements

GIS data produced under this project must adhere to the requirements of EPA's National Geospatial Data Policy (see <https://www.epa.gov/geospatial/epa-national-geospatial-data-policy>). Specifically, the selected contractor must provide documentation for all produced data, including source information for each digital data layer (i.e., scale and accuracy, map projection, coordinate system, etc.), and specific information about the data layer itself (i.e., method used, geographic extent of data layer, file format, date of creation, staff contact, description and definition of data fields and their contents, related files, if any, and description of data quality and quality assurance methods used). The EPA Metadata Editor (EME) was developed to simplify and standardize metadata development and is a recommended tool for streamlining production of required metadata. The EME and related training materials can be downloaded from <https://edg.epa.gov/EME/>. Specific technical guidance on geospatial deliverables and acceptable formats can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/geospatial/epa-region-2-gis-deliverables-guidance>. GIS data produced under this project will be submitted to NEIWPC as a deliverable.

Surveys & Information Collection

This project is funded through a U.S. EPA Assistance Agreement with NEIWPC. NEIWPC cannot use these funds to support a survey without completion of an Information Collection Request (ICR) describing the survey. The ICR must be submitted to the U.S. EPA Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval. This is an extensive process that can take several months to complete; at times, this process has taken as many as six months. A survey is defined as the collection of identical information from ten or more non-Federal respondents within a 12-month period. OMB approval must be received before any survey activities supported by NEIWPC funds can begin. If the selected contractor is providing non-federal match for this project, these matching funds may be used to support the cost of designing and administering a survey without the development of an ICR. NEIWPC funds may be used for analysis of the survey data and publication of the results regardless of whether or not an ICR is completed.

Insurance Requirements

NEIWPC requires its contractors to maintain Workers Compensation and General Liability insurance. More details will be provided to applicants selected for funding. Note this applies for all contractors, including sole proprietors. If you cannot provide proof of insurance, please do not apply for this funding opportunity. More information on insurance requirements is available on our Contractor Guidance page: <https://neiwpc.org/about-us/working-with-neiwpc/contractor-guidance>.



V. Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include a (1) cover letter, (2) title page with abstract, (3) narrative with citations and supporting materials, (4) timeline, (5) budgets, including both overall and task-based budget formats and budget justification, and (6) description of qualifications. Page limits for each of these components are provided in the individual descriptions below.

Proposals that do not contain all of the information requested and/or do not meet the format requirements will be eliminated from consideration. Pages that exceed the maximum number specified for each section will not be reviewed.

Ideal proposals will offer Benefit Function Transfer as the study methodology, demonstrate past success in similar economic analyses and public facing reporting using brief descriptions of published papers, reports, or other documents, along with links to the full versions of the described documents. Furthermore, ideal proposals will have an experienced environmental economist with a Ph.D. either directly involved in the analysis or serving in direct supervision of the project.

1. Cover Letter

Please include a one-page cover letter, printed on official letterhead and signed by an authorized representative of the lead agency, firm, or institution, with each proposal. The cover letter must state that:

- You are applying for funds under this program.
- You acknowledge that funding is provided on a reimbursement basis.

2. Title Page

For your convenience, an electronic version of the title page is available as a Microsoft Word document at <http://neiwpc.org/about-us/working-with-neiwpc/> and in Appendix A. The title page must include all of the following information, using a maximum of one single-spaced, one-sided, typed 8.5" x 11" page with 11-point font and 1-inch margins:

- **Project Name:** NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Economic Analysis
- **Primary Investigator Name and Contact Information:** Provide the name, title, and affiliation of the primary investigator, as well as mailing address, phone number, and email address.
- **Financial Contact Name and Contact Information** (if applicable): Provide the name, title, and affiliation of the individual responsible for financial/contractual negotiations (if different from primary investigator), as well as mailing address, phone number, and email address.
- **Project Partners** (if any): Provide the names, titles, affiliations, for each of the additional investigators or support staff who will significantly contribute to the project (if any).
- **Funds Requested:** Provide the amount of money you are requesting from NEIWPCC for the project.
- **Federal Tax Identification Number (FID)**



- **DUNS Number⁵:** A DUNS number is a unique, non-indicative 9-digit identifier that verifies the existence of a business entity globally. Contractors must provide NEIWPC with a DUNS number to comply with an administrative condition of NEIWPC's EPA grant (individuals are exempt).
- **Certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE):** Indicate if your organization is a DBE.
- **Abstract:** The abstract must accurately describe the proposed approach to meet the project goals and include: (1) the objectives of the project, (2) the economic methodology to be used, and (3) the proposed reporting strategy. **The abstract must fit within the title page.**

3. Proposal Narrative & Supporting Materials

The proposal narrative must not exceed eight (8) consecutively numbered, single-spaced, typed 8.5" x 11" pages with 11-point font and 1-inch margins. The narrative must include all of the following information:

- **Description of Proposed Approach:** Briefly describe your proposed approach to this project and its relevance to the goals described in this request. This section can also include brief background or introductory information.
- **Methodology:** Outline the project's design and describe the methods and techniques that will be used to meet the project's goal and tasks.
- **Expected outputs and outcomes:** Describe the project's expected outputs and outcomes and how they achieve the goal of this RFP. List and describe each of the specific deliverables and end-products.
- Briefly discuss the **process to be used to evaluate the effectiveness and success** of the project.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Define the roles and responsibilities of all project participants.
- Brief descriptions of successfully completed **benefit function transfer projects** with links or citations to the full document as appropriate.
- Brief descriptions of **public facing outreach reports and other materials**, with links or citations as appropriate.
- Include **references** as appropriate (not included in page limit)

4. Timeline

Provide a detailed timeline for meeting identified tasks and completing deliverables, with a completion date no later than May 30, 2023. Although the project start date is anticipated to be on or about March 1, 2021, this date may change based on the time the actual agreement is established.

All timelines should be stated in terms of Month #1, #2, #4, etc. rather than specific dates, (e.g. "end of month #12" not "March 31, 2022.") The timeline must be no more than two (2) 8.5" x 11" pages with 1" margins and 11-point font.

⁵ Obtaining a DUNS number is free for all entities doing business with the Federal government. Under normal circumstances the DUNS number is issued within 1-2 business days when using the web form process (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>).

5. Budget

The project budget must be provided in two formats:

First, provide a complete, detailed budget using the format provided in Appendix B. For your convenience, an electronic version of the budget form is available at <http://neiwpc.org/about-us/working-with-neiwpc/>. The budget must be no more than one 8.5" x 11" page with 1" margins and 11-point font. Along with this budget, provide a brief justification (one page maximum) for the proposed costs in terms of meeting project objectives. Include an explanation of how indirect costs are calculated. Justify subcontracts, if any. Identify and describe current and pending financial resources (including the source) for any non-federal cost share or matching funds that are intended to support the project. Entities intending to use a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate must provide documentation of their rate. This documentation does not count toward the page limit.

Second, prepare a budget that is broken down by project tasks as shown in Appendix C. For your convenience, an electronic version of the budget form is available at <http://neiwpc.org/about-us/working-with-neiwpc/>. **As you develop this budget, keep in mind that contractual payments will be made based on this budget and that NEIWPCC cannot process payments for partially-completed tasks.** It is acceptable to break down projects into smaller sub-tasks, but each sub-task must have a clearly defined deliverable. This budget must be no more than two (2) 8.5" x 11" pages with 1" margins and 11-point font. Matching funds should not be included in the task-based budget.

6. Qualifications

The applicant chosen for this project should possess the academic and/or professional expertise and certifications in the relevant subject areas, and have a strong track record in delivering projects of this nature. Applicants must be able to demonstrate extensive experience in benefit function transfer studies. Ideal proposals will have an experienced environmental economist with a Ph.D. either directly involved in the analysis or serving in direct supervision of the project. Attention to detail in documenting qualifications that meet the scoring requirements is strongly advised. The qualifications section, including resumes, CVs, etc. must not exceed four (4) pages.

VI. Submission Process

Proposals must be submitted by no later than **12:00 PM EST (noon) on January 6, 2021**. No late submissions will be considered. Applicants **must submit their proposals electronically** through the NEIWPCC website. Unless prior approval is given, proposals received through e-mail, postal delivery, or any other delivery method will not be accepted.

To submit your proposal, go to <http://neiwpc.org/about-us/working-with-neiwpc/contractor-proposal-submissions/> and follow the instructions provided for uploading your file(s). It is highly preferred that the proposal and all supporting information are submitted as a single PDF document in searchable PDF format. If multiple files are to be submitted, you will need to create an archive file (.zip, or .rar) containing all of the files you wish to submit. The file name should be in the following format: "HEP Econ_NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION." Once you have clicked the "submit" button, please allow adequate time for your submission to process and do not hit the back button or close your browser

window. The process is not considered complete until you have reached the confirmation page. If submitted successfully, you will receive an email from NEIWPCC (mail@neiwpc.org) with the subject line “RFP Submission Confirmation” confirming your submission. For questions regarding submission of proposals, contact Emma Gildesgame, NEIWPCC, egildesgame@neiwpc.org, (978) 349-4318.

VII. Proposal Evaluation Process & Scoring Criteria

NEIWPCC will screen all proposals to ensure that they meet all requirements of this RFP. If a proposal is found to be incomplete, the proposal will be eliminated from the competition and NEIWPCC will notify the applicant. To be considered complete, proposals must include all of components described in [Section V](#) (Proposal Requirements). Pages in excess of the limits specified for each component will not be reviewed. Complete and eligible proposals will be reviewed by a panel composed of scientists, economists, and managers from NEIWPCC and partner agencies. Proposals may also be submitted for external peer reviews. The review team will evaluate the proposals based upon the following criteria:

- 1. Addresses Desired Outcomes (0-25 points):** Degree to which the proposal can accomplish the desired outcomes. Clarity and measurability of the deliverables/outputs within specific reasonable timeframe(s), including relationship of expected results/benefits to addressing this RFP’s topic.
- 2. Technical Merit (0-25 points):** Adequacy of the proposed methodology to accomplish the stated project tasks and objectives.
- 3. Performance Capability (0-25 points):** Ability of the applicant to accomplish the proposed project on schedule with quality given its history of past performance, experience, expertise, qualifications, facilities, and resources. Evaluators will consider the qualifications of the project team and ability of the proposed team to complete project tasks effectively and on time.
- 4. Appropriate and Cost-Effective Budget (0-15 points):** Proposal submissions will be evaluated based on cost and the relative value of work products. Adequacy of the proposed budget to accomplish objectives and adequacy of justification in explaining the need for resources for this project will be evaluated.
- 5. Project Schedule (0-10 points):** Practicality of proposed project schedule and ability to meet project tasks within desired project timeframe.
- 6. Transferability of Results (0-10 points):** Deliverables will be presented and produced in formats that can be easily understood and utilized by project partners and stakeholders.

VIII. Notification of Awards

Award notification to applicants is expected by February 12, 2021. Award recipients may be asked to submit a revised work plan, timeline, and budget at this time. Projects cannot start until the contract is signed by both parties and all mandatory documentation, including proof of General Liability Insurance and Worker’s Compensation, is received by NEIWPCC. Collection of data cannot begin until the QAPP is approved. NEIWPCC will not pay for expenses incurred prior to the contract start date. Payment for costs incurred will be on a reimbursement basis per the contract payment schedule and contingent upon completion of quarterly progress reports and project deliverables.



IX. Contacts & Questions

NEIWPCC will accept questions about this RFP by email or phone through December 21, 2020 at 12:00 PM (noon) EST. Questions submitted after that date may not be answered before the RFP deadline. Answers to all submitted questions will be posted online at <https://tinyurl.com/HEPEconRFP-Qs> by December 23, 2020 at 5pm.

For all questions regarding this RFP, contact **Emma Gildesgame**, the NEIWPCC Project Manager:

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