**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFA SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:** | RFA# 202410193 Research to Inform Responsible Floating Offshore Wind Development in the Gulf of Maine 2 |
| **RFA ISSUED BY:** | Governor’s Energy Office |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | December 3, 2024 |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | December 9, 2024 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | January 17, 2025, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, C, pg 6 | We are well positioned for all three opportunities, our team would like to understand whether the preference of your office would be to award all three projects to the same firm/entity, or if we should instead focus our efforts on one or two of those, with the understanding there is likely to be diversification amongst the awards? |
| **Answer** |
| Applications will be evaluated for each project based on the scoring criteria outlined in the Request for Applications (RFA). Applicants may apply for more than one project following the instructions in the RFA.  |

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| **2** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, C, pg 6 | Related to the costing requirements, is profit allowable for the prime or any subcontractors on any of the projects? |
| **Answer** |
| Applicants that maximize cost sharing or leveraging of funds will score highly on the cost proposal section, which is worth 25% of total points. |

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| **3** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Form, pg 8 | If our entity has a federally negotiated indirect (overhead) rate—are we permitted to use that full rate for our proposal budget? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, a federally negotiated indirect rate may be used in the cost proposal. Note that this funding is from a non federal source. Note that applicants that maximize cost sharing or leveraging of funds will score highly on the cost proposal section, which is worth 25% of total points. |

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| **4** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Form, pg 3 | Can prime contractors include subcontractor example projects in the Qualifications and Experience section? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, prime contractors may choose to include subcontractor example projects in the Qualifications and Experience section. |

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| **5** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part 1. C (Eligibility To Submit Bids), Pg 8 | Are all entity types, including private sector firms, eligible for the award? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, all entity types, including private sector firms, are eligible to apply.  |

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| **6** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Organization Qualifications and Experience, p.4 | The **Organization Qualifications and Experience** section includes a 2-4 page limit. Can an appendix with relevant maps and/or figures be provided outside of the 2-4 page limit? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, a brief appendix with additional information can be included. |

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| **7** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Organization Qualifications and Experience, p.4 | The **Organization Qualifications and Experience** section asks for a statement of qualifications as well as three project examples. Does the 2-4 page limit apply only to the narrative statement of qualifications, or should the narrative AND project examples section together be limited to 2-4 pages? Can supporting information, including resumes of key staff, be provided in an appendix that does not contribute to the page count? |
| **Answer** |
| The entire Organization Qualifications and Experience section should endeavor to follow the 2-4 page guideline. As an example, full CVs are discouraged and summarized biographies are encouraged. |

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| **8** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Subcontractors, p.5 | The **Subcontractors** section asks that the Applicant "Describe the application and review process the Applicant will use to evaluate the qualifications and experience of potential subcontractors, and how the Applicant will ensure that debarred, suspended, or otherwise ineligible parties are excluded from all subcontract relationships." Where should that information be provided? Can a description of the subcontractor’s qualifications be provided in lieu of a description of an evaluation process? |
| **Answer** |
| It is the Applicant’s responsibility to sign the Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certificate (page 2 of the Application Form). Any information the Applicant chooses to include in their application related to their process to engage any subcontractors should be provided in the “Brief Description of Anticipated Role and Qualifications” for subcontractors. The subcontractor’s qualifications and anticipated role should be included in the same section. |

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| **9** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Organizational Chart, p.5 | Does the **Organizational Chart** need to include the entire Applicant organization, or only the individuals proposed to support this project? |
| **Answer** |
| The Organizational Chart only needs to include the proposed project team. Each position must be identified by position title and corresponding to the personnel job descriptions. The organizational chart must include subcontractors if the Applicant is planning to engage any. |

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| **10** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Cost Proposal – Budget Table, p.8 | In the **Cost Proposal – Budget Table** section, what information should each row under each Task Number include? Should the rows under each task be used to list the individuals who will perform services under that task, or should each row list a component activity of that task? If the row should list a component activity that will be performed by multiple individuals with different cost rates, is it acceptable to list a range in the “cost per hour” field? |
| **Answer** |
| In the Cost Proposal- Budget Table section, the rows under each task should be used to list the project team members that will be utilized to complete each task. A specific “cost per hour” should be listed for each project team member. |

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| **11** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Partnerships and Letters of Commitment/Support, p.9 | Are we permitted to provide a narrative description of partnerships and collaborations in the **Partnerships and Letters of Commitment/Support** section, in addition to the Letters of Commitment that we will attach? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, a brief narrative description of partnerships and collaborations can be included. If they are contributing to the scope of work, their role should be clearly defined and outlined in the Proposed Scope of Work. |

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| **12** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, A, Section 2, Pg 10 | Regarding Project 1, will Maine Governor’s Energy Office (GEO) be facilitating access to federal (NOAA) and state (Department of Marine Resources) confidential data (e.g., vessel trip reports), or is that expected of the consultant? |
| **Answer** |
| GEO will support the awarded applicant in securing access to federal and state confidential data, but GEO cannot guarantee access to any confidential data. |

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| **13** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 1, pg 13 | Regarding Project 3, what geographic area in the Gulf of Maine is highest priority? Around the lease areas? |
| **Answer** |
| It is up to the applicant to propose a geographic area that would yield the most useful baseline data to inform potential impacts of floating offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine. The applicant should consider the results of the Gulf of Maine lease sale in their survey plan, but this project is not tied to any one lease area.  |

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| **14** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 1, pg 14 | Regarding Project 3, will we be provided Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife’s (DIFW) 2024 survey data that is referenced? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, the applicant will be provided the MDIFW 2024 survey data upon the project start date (or as soon as it’s available). For an update on what bat survey efforts have been conducted around the Maine Offshore Wind Research Array as part of the Consortium-funded seafloor mapping project, please see the [slides](https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/meetings/2024%2011%2022%20AB%20Meeting%20Slides.pdf) from the Research Consortium Advisory Board meeting held on November 22 (slides 6-12). |

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| **15** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 1, pg 14 | Regarding Project 3, what is meant by “building on” MDIFW 2024 surveys? Are we supposed to continue studying the same locations to build a longer dataset or take what was learned and apply it at different locations? |
| **Answer** |
| Project 3 builds upon the work that is currently being completed by MDIFW’s work but is not necessarily confined to studying the same locations. It is up to the applicant to propose a geographic area that would yield the most useful baseline data to characterize bat usage in the Gulf of Maine to inform potential impacts of floating offshore wind. |

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| **16** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 1, pg 14 | Regarding Project 3, are there offshore buoys that were part of the MDIFW survey effort that we could use? |
| **Answer** |
| No, buoys were not a part of the MDIFW 2024 survey. A combination of land based acoustic monitors and monitors attached to vessels were used. The applicant could propose to utilize buoys as part of their survey effort. |

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| **17** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 2, pg 14 | Regarding Project 3, is the awardee supposed to acquire their own vessels? |
| **Answer** |
| The primary objective of this project is to collect and analyze acoustic data on bat species to characterize baseline bat activity in the offshore Gulf of Maine (with emphasis on seasonal abundance and distribution). However, the applicant is not required to use vessels. If vessels are part of the applicant’s proposed survey plan, then the applicant must acquire and/or make arrangements to use vessels within the budget maximum of $400,000. The applicant will be made aware of any state surveys that may allow for opportunistic surveying.  |

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| **18** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 2, pg 14 | Regarding Project 3, should the surveys just be focused on Fall 2025 or could it be a longer effort? |
| **Answer** |
| There is no seasonality defined in Project 3; however, an objective emphasis is on better understanding seasonal abundance and distribution of bats. If the applicant can begin the survey period earlier, or extend the survey period beyond Fall 2025, and remain within the budget maximum of $400,000, that is encouraged. |

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| **19** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 2, pg 14 | Regarding Project 3, we’re assuming that we should be using the most current US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) bat summer survey guidelines (2024). Is that correct? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, the applicant should follow the 2024 USFWS bat summer survey guidelines, as appropriate. The USFWS and North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat) survey methodologies could be used for guidance on how to conduct acoustic bat surveys. However, the applicant is not restricted to their methodologies and should submit a study plan that best meets the objectives of the RFA. The USFWS guidance is designed for land-based acoustics and does not delve into offshore environments. The current USFWS guidelines can be found here: <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/range-wide-indiana-bat-and-northern-long-eared-bat-survey-guidelines>. |

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| **20** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 3, pg 14 | Regarding Project 3, what is the deadline for reporting? |
| **Answer** |
| A reporting schedule will be established with the applicant at the contracting stage.  |

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| **21** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 1, pg 13 | Regarding Project 3, is there any information available about the MDIFW methods used in the Fall 2024 offshore bat survey? |
| **Answer** |
| The Fall 2024 MDIFW offshore bat survey used two components running concurrently: the first component utilized stationary acoustic detectors located on offshore islands and locations along the Maine coast. The second component utilized mobile acoustic detectors affixed to both Department of Marine Resource survey vessels and commercial vessels. Nightly bat acoustic monitoring occurred from June 2024 to November 2024. |

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| **22** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, C, Section 2, pg 13 | Regarding Project 3, is there a preference on the number of detectors to be deployed? |
| **Answer** |
| No, a strong application should justify the applicant’s proposed approach, align with best practices, and maximize the budget. |