**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Economic & Community Development**

*Office of Business Development*



**RFP# 202405101**

**Blue Economy Task Force Project Management and**

**Subject Matter Expertise**

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| **RFP Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFP must be made through the RFP Coordinator identified below*.**Name:** Charlotte Mace **Title:** Director, Office of Business Development**Contact Information:** charlotte.mace@maine.gov  |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFP Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** June 11, 2024 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **Proposal Submission Deadline** | *Proposals must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:***Submission Deadline:** June 25, 2024 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.*Proposals must be submitted electronically to:* Proposals@maine.gov |

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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**State of Maine**

**Department of Economic & Community Development**

**RFP# 202405101**

**Blue Economy Task Force Project Management and Subject Matter Expertise**

The State of Maine is seeking proposals for a qualified professional firm to assisting with staffing of the State of Maine’s Blue Economy Task Force, per S.P. 523 – LD 1286, *Resolve, to Establish the Blue Economy Task Force to Support Maine’s Emergence as a Center for Blue Economy Innovation and Opportunity in the 21st Century*. With oversight and strategic direction provided by the Department of Economic & Community Development’s Office of Business Development, the staffing will include project management, subject matter expertise in blue economies across the globe, adherence to the statute, and preparation of a report to the 132nd Legislature in 2025.

A copy of the RFP, as well as the Question & Answer Summary and all amendments related to the RFP, can be obtained at: <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfps>

Proposals must be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services, via e-mail, at: Proposals@maine.gov. Proposal submissions must be received no later than 11:59 p.m., local time, on June 25, 2024. Proposals will be opened the following business day. Proposals not submitted to the Division of Procurement Services’ aforementioned e-mail address by the aforementioned deadline will not be considered for contract award.

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**RFP TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

The following terms and acronyms, as referenced in the RFP, shall have the meanings indicated below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **Department** | Department of Economic and Community Development |
| **BETF** | Blue Economy Task Force |
| **IDEAB** | Joint Standing Committing on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business |
| **OBD** | Office of Business Development |
| **RFP** | Request for Proposal |
| **State** | State of Maine |

**State of Maine - Department of Economic & Community Development**

*Office of Business Development*

**RFP# 202405101**

**Blue Economy Task Force Project Management and Subject Matter Expertise**

**PART I INTRODUCTION**

1. **Purpose and Background**

Per statute (see Attachment F), the Department is required to convene the Blue Economy Task Force (BETF) to support Maine’s emergence as a center for blue economy innovation and opportunity in the 21st century. “Blue economy” means business sectors that rely on the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic health, improved livelihoods, jobs or ecosystem health.

The task force is comprised of specific members, defined in statute. Per statute, the BETF will include no less than 13 members including representatives of public and private research institutions, businesses that are innovating in various blue economy sectors, fisheries businesses, aquaculture businesses and equity investors in blue economy businesses and the President of the Maine Technology Institute or the president’s designee. A majority of the task force membership must represent either blue economy businesses or entities directly involved in the commercialization of blue economy-related research and innovation. The members of this task force have already been selected by the State of Maine. This RFP does not include work to select the task force members, though if task force members are not able to continue during the course of the task force’s work, the consultant will be responsible for communications related to this departure and recruitment of a replacement member, if needed.

Based on initial consultation with Maine’s blue economy stakeholders, OBD anticipates that the goal of the BETF will be to ensure adherence to the statute’s requirements, but also to:

* Define what “blue economy” means for the State of Maine (develop an actual written definition based on consensus);
* Brainstorm the most compelling branding for Maine’s Blue Economy (this is idea and feel only, not development of logo or other traditional marketing materials);
* Coalesce diverse perspectives around the idea of Maine’s Blue Economy, energizing stakeholders on vision, goals, strategies, and next steps;
* Prepare a thoughtful report to the Maine legislature that shows adherence to the spirit and content of the statute and accurately reports on the activities of the task force; and
* Delineate a concise, clear, actionable list of recommendations, no more than five. The audience for these recommendations is policymakers who may consider substantial appropriations to advance Maine’s blue economy to the next level.

It is anticipated that any bidders who can show previous experience in blue economy efforts in areas other than Maine will receive a higher score. However, bidders must also show either previous experience working in Maine, experience working with marine economies similar to Maine, or show unequivocally they can get up to speed on the complex nature of Maine’s coastal resources and stakeholders.

1. **General Provisions**
	1. From the time the RFP is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding the RFP must be made through the RFP Coordinator. No other person/ State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding the RFP. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the bidding process, at the State’s discretion.
	2. Issuance of the RFP does not commit the Department to issue an award or to pay expenses incurred by a Bidder in the preparation of a response to the RFP. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings and software or system demonstrations, where applicable.
	3. All proposals must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in the RFP and all written supplements and amendments (such as the Summary of Questions and Answers), issued by the Department. Proposals are to follow the format and respond to all questions and instructions specified below in the “Proposal Submission Requirements” section of the RFP.
	4. Bidders will take careful note that in evaluating a proposal submitted in response to the RFP, the Department will consider materials provided in the proposal, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal Departmental information of previous contract history with the Bidder (if any). The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating a Bidder’s experience and capabilities.
	5. The proposal must be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Bidder and must contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
	6. The RFP and the awarded Bidder’s proposal, including all appendices or attachments, will be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
	7. Following announcement of an award decision, all submissions in response to this RFP will be public records, available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) ([1 M.R.S. § 401](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html) et seq.).
	8. The Department, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in proposals received in response to the RFP.
	9. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, are included by this reference. It is the Bidder’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.
2. **Contract Term**

The Department is seeking a cost-efficient proposal to provide services, as defined in the RFP, for the anticipated contract period defined in the table below. Please note, the dates below are estimated and may be adjusted, as necessary, in order to comply with all procedural requirements associated with the RFP and the contracting process. The actual contract start date will be established by a completed and approved contract.

Contract Renewal: Following the initial term of the contract, the Department may opt to renew the contract for two renewal periods, as shown in the table below, and subject to continued availability of funding and satisfactory performance.

The term of the anticipated contract, resulting from the RFP, is defined as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Period** | **Start Date** | **End Date** |
| Initial Period of Performance | July 1, 2024 | June 30, 2025 |
| Renewal Period #1 | July 1, 2025 | June 30, 2026 |
| Renewal Period #2 | July 1, 2026 | June 30, 2027 |

1. **Number of Awards**

The Department anticipates making one (1) award as a result of the RFP process.

**PART II SCOPE OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED**

1. **TASKS**

OBD requires the following tasks to be performed over the twelve-month period of the contract:

1. **BETF Project Management/Staffing.** Project management is required to streamline communication with the task force, convene the task force via remote meetings (Zoom or Microsoft Teams) at a frequency anticipated to be once per month between July 2024 and January 2025, and keep track of meeting agendas, discussion, results of consultations, etc. The project management should be highly effective and result in clear communications with both OBD and BETF members, as well as ensuring adherence to the statute. This includes sending of emails to BETF members, scheduling the BETF meetings, setting up the Zoom/Teams link with links available within the calendar invites, setting up the calendar invites, drafting meeting agendas, taking notes during meetings, recording meeting minutes, and providing content for website updated and/or social media posts.
2. **BETF Consultation.** As described in the statute, the BETF must consult with individuals and entities involved in the blue economy. The project manager will organize, schedule, and moderate this consultation during the monthly BETF meetings. BETF will consult with:
3. Relevant state agencies, including the Department of Marine Resources, the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future and the State Economist
4. Publicly funded institutions:
	* Maine Maritime Academy
	* the University of Maine's MARINE initiative,
	* the University of Maine's Aquaculture Research Institute,
	* the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center; and
	* the University of Maine's Maine Sea Grant.
5. Trade associations that represent businesses within sectors of the blue economy:
	* Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association
	* Maine Aquaculture Association

1. Businesses that build boats or manage boatyards, representatives of businesses that develop marine technologies, products and services, including innovative and emerging technology, and representatives of businesses that engage in marine construction or marine engineering
2. Blue economy investors representing different stages and scale of business investment;
3. Representatives of the Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine, or SEA Maine, and individuals involved in developing the Maine Aquaculture Roadmap and the Offshore Wind Roadmap;
4. Representatives of federally recognized Indian tribes in the State; and
5. Representatives of organizations engaged in conservation and sustainable coastal and island development:
6. **BETF Report.** Through data gathering during the BETF Consultation and other activities, the consultant will develop a report that outlines the sectors of the State’s blue economy and existing economic development plans or strategies for blue economy sectors and identifies opportunities where the State can enhance or facilitate the growth and scaling of blue economy businesses. The report developed must include the following:
7. A description of the blue economy, in consideration of Maine’s unique assets and competitive strengths, that includes references to the sectors or areas that rely on the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic health, improved livelihoods, jobs or ecosystem health;
8. A review of how other coastal states have formed ocean clusters and are approaching planning for, or catalyzing expansion of, blue economy activity in those states as part of a long-term economic development strategy;
9. A review of how at least 2 other countries with established blue economies have sparked economic development through ocean clusters and are strategically approaching planning and continued investments;
10. A clear identification of both current and emerging sectors within the State's blue economy and which of those sectors have a specific economic development plan, strategy or roadmap and whether that plan, strategy or roadmap is either part of or separate from a statewide economic development plan;
11. For sectors within the State's blue economy that do not have a specific economic development plan, strategy or roadmap:
* Identification of current and potential future opportunities for those sectors;
* A description of the competitive advantage the State may have for the opportunities identified above; and
* Existing assets, physical or otherwise, within the State that can help the State take advantage of opportunities identified above;
1. For sectors within the State's blue economy with an existing economic development plan, strategy or roadmap, an overview of that economic development plan, strategy or roadmap and an identification of any recommendations that could enhance or facilitate growth of those sectors. Recommendations made in the report may not be inconsistent with, and must build upon, existing State and/or industry-led plans and road maps;
2. An identification of strategies within the Maine Economic Development Strategy and Maine Won't Wait climate action plan that are important to businesses in the blue economy; and
3. Recommendations about whether a state-level strategy, action plan or other

mechanism would better position the State to take advantage of opportunities identified in the report. This may include recommendations for state and/or federal appropriations.

The consultant will manage the BETF such that they will focus on business opportunities, economic growth and research and technology transfers, including growth opportunities for businesses in the State as well as opportunities to attract businesses from elsewhere to expand operations in the State.

The report should also include an economic baseline for Maine’s blue economy, based on the definition that the BETF drafts. This baseline should leverage existing economic data available (e.g., State Economist) and include brief recommendations on how Maine aspires to achieve a new baseline over the course of a decade.

OBD understands that this level of assessment is unlikely to be achieved with the budget allowed by the statute. However, a successful bidder will describe their strategy for developing this report in their proposal using a combination of leveraging existing studies, relying on previous projects or subject matter expertise, collaborating with Maine-based organizations that have existing expertise in this area, and incorporating recommendations into the report for additional studies and resources. Please also note that some of the elements described here are already well-defined by existing State and/or industry-led strategies.

1. **Legislative Letter.** Prepare a letter to the Governor and the Joint Standing Committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business (IDEAB), to include a concise, thoughtful, and compelling executive summary of the BETF report that includes the five recommendations describe above. The letter will be drafted correctly for a legislative letter, and the BETF report will be appended to this letter. The consultant will be available, if requested by IDEAB, to provide an oral presentation on the report to the committee.
2. **Monthly Progress Meetings.** The consultant will meet with the OBD Director monthly, at a mutually agreed time to discuss project progress, upcoming tasks, and agendas for upcoming BETF meetings.

Please note that a contract extension period has been anticipated such that, if the legislature deems that additional funding is provided to implement the recommendations described in the BETF report, it is likely that the successful bidder will be awarded a contract extension to lead this work.

All tasks will be undertaken under the direction and oversight of the Office of Business Development Director. All meeting agendas and draft deliverables will be submitted to the OBD Director for review and approval. Project progress will be reviewed/approved by the Commissioner of the Department, or her designee, if requested. All legislative communications will be reviewed and approved by the Commissioner’s Office.

1. **DELIVERABLES**

The contractor will prepare both a draft and final version of each of the deliverables described below, unless one draft is decided upon by the OBD Director. For each draft deliverable, OBD will have the opportunity to review and suggest revisions. Also, for each deliverable, the contractor and OBD will agree on a format and approximate length. OBD prefers well-organized, concise deliverables with bullets, simple yet compelling graphics, and clear executive summaries and recommendations. This is preferred over length and extensive historical/background information.

1. **BETF Task Force Member List.** Based on the draft task force member list to be provided to the consultant, the consultant will finalize the list of names with titles, company names, full contact information, brief bios, and photos for each member. This effort should require approximately 2-4 hours to complete. The consultant will be provided with a list of emails for the existing task force members. All task force members have been invited and have already confirmed their participation in the BETF.
2. **Task Force Web Content.** The consultant will provide a brief narrative on the activities of the BETF, as well as a list of members, along with their brief bios and photos, for inclusion on the OBD website. OBD will create the page on the OBD website and will publish this material to the website. This effort is minimal and would likely require no more than 2-4 hours for the consultant to complete.
3. **BETF Schedule and Meeting Agendas/Notes/Minutes.** Develop a meeting schedule for the time period July 2024-January 2025 to be shared with BETF members by August 1, 2024. All calendar invites should be completed at this time and populated with remote meeting information. Doodle polls are not preferred – a set time for the meeting will be established each month. If BETF members aren’t able to attend, they can send their questions/notes ahead of time to the consultant for inclusion in the meeting’s agenda/conversation. Meeting agendas will be distributed to BETF members at least one week in advance of each meeting. The meetings will be organized based on the Consultation task described above and in the statute (see Task 2, above). The consultant will take notes/minutes in a format previously approved by the Department. It is not anticipated that notes/minutes will be published to the general public or published on the website. It is not anticipated that BETF meetings will be recorded or public.
4. **BETF Report.** A draft and final report prepared in accordance with the specific report requirements per the statute (see Task 3, above). The report will be prepared in Microsoft Word in a format that allows edits/comments from multiple parties. The consultant can suggest an alternative method to capture edits, if requested. Google Docs is not preferred.
5. **One-Pager.** Based on the high-level goals described above, the consultant should prepare a one-pager on Maine’s blue economy that defines Maine’s blue economy, attempts to capture the brand, and distills the BETF’s vision in a few compelling bullets. A cross between a campaign poster and a social media infographic, this one-pager aims to help energize Maine about the future of Maine’s blue economy. The Department will post it to its BETF webpage, upload to LinkedIn, etc. If the consultant needs to subcontract design services, OBD prefers to do the design itself to save budget, and the consultant can provide raw content to OBD. OBD can procure State-appropriate photography.
6. **Legislative Letter.** A draft and final legislative letter to accompany the BETF Report to the IDEAB committee. This letter will be provided to OBD, as well as the Commissioner’s Office for review, approval, signing, and distribution to the legislature.
7. **Kick-Off and Progress Meetings.** The consultant will meet with the OBD Director during project kick-off (July 2024, as soon as possible after contract is finalized). Monthly progress meetings with the OBD Director will also be required. It is anticipated additional meetings may be needed during/after report preparation, with the OBD Director and Commissioner’s Office as requested.

**PART III KEY RFP EVENTS**

1. **Questions**
	1. **General Instructions:** It is the responsibility of all Bidders and other interested parties to examine the entire RFP and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.
		1. Bidders and other interested parties should use **Appendix E** (Submitted Questions Form) for submission of questions. The form is to be submitted as a WORD document.
		2. The Submitted Questions Form must be submitted, by e-mail, and received by the RFP Coordinator identified on the cover page of the RFP as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFP cover page.
		3. Submitted Questions must include the RFP Number and Title in the subject line of the e-mail. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.
	2. **Question & Answer Summary:** Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the proposal due date: [Division of Procurement Services RFP Page](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfps). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.
2. **Amendments**

All amendments released in regard to the RFP will also be posted on the following website: [Division of Procurement Services RFP Page](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfps). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

1. **Submitting the Proposal**
	1. **Proposals Due:** Proposals must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. local time, on the date listed on the cover page of the RFP.
		1. Any e-mails containing original proposal submissions or any additional or revised proposal files, received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline, will be rejected without exception.
	2. **Delivery Instructions:** E-mail proposal submissions are to be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services at Proposals@maine.gov.
		1. Only proposal submissions received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.
			1. Proposal submission e-mails that are successfully received by the proposals@maine.gov inbox will receive an automatic reply stating as such.
		2. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail proposal submissions that have the actual requested files attached will be accepted.
		3. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. Please check with your organization’s Information Technology team to ensure that your security settings will not encrypt your proposal submission.
		4. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Bidders may submit files separately across multiple e-mails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All e-mails and files must be received by the due date and time listed above.
		5. Bidders are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail proposal submission: **“RFP# 202405101 Proposal Submission – [Bidder’s Name]”**
		6. Bidder’s proposal submissions are to be broken down into multiple files, with each file named as it is titled in bold below, and include:
* **File 1 [Bidder’s Name] – Preliminary Information:**

*PDF format preferred*

**Appendix A** (Proposal Cover Page)

**Appendix B** (Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification)

All required eligibility documentation stated in PART IV, Section I.

* **File 2 [Bidder’s Name] – Organization Qualifications and Experience:**

*PDF format preferred*

**Appendix C** (Organization Qualifications and Experience Form) and all required information and attachments stated in PART IV, Section II.

* **File 3 [Bidder’s Name] – Proposed Services:**

*PDF format preferred*

All required information and attachments stated in PART IV, Section III.

* **File 4 [Bidder’s Name] – Cost Proposal:**

PDF *format preferred*

**Appendix D** (Cost Proposal Form) and all required information and attachments stated in PART IV, Section IV.

**PART IV PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

This section contains instructions for Bidders to use in preparing their proposals. The Department seeks detailed yet succinct responses that demonstrate the Bidder’s qualifications, experience, and ability to perform the requirements specified throughout the RFP.

The Bidder’s proposal must follow the outline used below, including the numbering, section, and sub-section headings. Failure to use the outline specified in PART IV, or failure to respond to all questions and instructions throughout the RFP, may result in the proposal being disqualified as non-responsive or receiving a reduced score. The Department, and its evaluation team, has sole discretion to determine whether a variance from the RFP specifications will result either in disqualification or reduction in scoring of a proposal. Rephrasing of the content provided in the RFP will, at best, be considered minimally responsive.

Bidders are not to provide additional attachments beyond those specified in the RFP for the purpose of extending their response. Additional materials not requested will not be considered part of the proposal and will not be evaluated. Include any forms provided in the submission package or reproduce those forms as closely as possible. All information must be presented in the same order and format as described in the RFP.

**Proposal Format and Contents**

**Section I Preliminary Information** (File #1)

* 1. **Proposal Cover Page**

Bidders must complete **Appendix A** (Proposal Cover Page). It is critical that the cover page show the specific information requested, including Bidder address(es) and other details listed. The Proposal Cover Page must be dated and signed by a person authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the Bidder.

* 1. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**

Bidders must complete **Appendix B** (Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification Form). The Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification Form must be dated and signed by a person authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the Bidder.

**Section II Organization Qualifications and Experience** (File #2)

* 1. **Overview of the Organization**

Bidders must complete **Appendix C** (Qualifications and Experience Form) describing their qualifications and skills to provide the requested services in the RFP. Bidders must include three examples of projects which demonstrate their experience and expertise in performing these services as well as highlighting the Bidder’s stated qualifications and skills.

* 1. **Subcontractors**

If subcontractors are to be used, Bidders must provide a list that specifies the name, address, phone number, contact person, and a brief description of the subcontractors’ organizational capacity and qualifications.

* 1. **Organizational Chart**

Bidders must provide an organizational chart. The organizational chart must include the project being proposed. Each position must be identified by position title and corresponding to the personnel job descriptions. The most competitive proposals will showcase the depth of experience of the staff who will actually be doing the work rather than the experience of a management team who will not directly oversee the project or be involved in day-to-day work.

* 1. **Litigation**

Bidders must attach a list of all current litigation in which the Bidder is named and a list of all closed cases that have closed within the past five (5) years in which the Bidder paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree.  For each, list the entity bringing suit, the complaint, the accusation, amount, and outcome.

* 1. **Certificate of Insurance**

Bidders must provide a certificate of insurance on a standard ACORD form (or the equivalent) evidencing the Bidder’s general liability, professional liability and any other relevant liability insurance policies that might be associated with the proposed services.

**Section III Proposed Services** (File #3)

* 1. **Services to be Provided**

Discuss the Scope of Services referenced above in Part II of the RFP and what the Bidder will offer. Give particular attention to describing the methods and resources you will use and how you will accomplish the tasks involved. Describe how you will ensure expectations and/or desired outcomes as a result of these services will be achieved. If subcontractors are involved, clearly identify the work each will perform. Description of Services should be concise yet include sufficient detail that shows the Bidder is familiar with this type of work. Bulleted lists, tables, and other methods of clearly organizing your response is preferred, rather than lengthy narratives with an abundance of background information. The description should also show that the Bidder has researched the State of Maine sufficiently to craft a smart and thoughtful response to this RFP.

* 1. **Implementation - Work Plan**

Provide a realistic work plan for the implementation of the program through the first contract period. Display the work plan in a timeline chart. Concisely describe each program development and implementation task, the month it will be carried out and the person or position responsible for each task. If applicable, make note of all tasks to be delegated to subcontractors. The work plan should include each of the tasks and deliverables described in Part II, above. OBD works quickly to respond to investment attraction leads and we often need to work “at the speed of business,” which may be different than other government entities. Be sure to show in your work plan how you can also work efficiently.

**Section IV** **Cost Proposal** (File #4)

* 1. **General Instructions**
		1. Bidders must submit a cost proposal that covers the period starting July 1, 2024 and ending on May 30, 2025.
		2. The cost proposal must include the costs necessary for the Bidder to fully comply with the contract terms, conditions, and RFP requirements.
		3. No costs related to the preparation of the proposal for the RFP, or to the negotiation of the contract with the Department, may be included in the proposal. Only costs to be incurred after the contract effective date that are specifically related to the implementation or operation of contracted services may be included.
	2. **Cost Proposal Form Instructions**

Bidders must fill out **Appendix D** (Cost Proposal Form), following the instructions detailed here and in the form. Failure to provide the requested information, and to follow the required cost proposal format provided, may result in the exclusion of the proposal from consideration, at the discretion of the Department.

**PART V PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

Evaluation of the submitted proposals will be accomplished as follows:

1. **Evaluation Process – General Information**
	1. An evaluation team, composed of qualified reviewers, will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFP.
	2. Officials responsible for making decisions on the award selection will ensure that the selection process accords equal opportunity and appropriate consideration to all who are capable of meeting the specifications. The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the proposals and to ensure that the contract is awarded to the Bidder whose proposal provides the best value to the State of Maine.
	3. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Bidders, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the proposals received. The Department may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications and/or interviews/presentations. Changes to proposals, including updating or adding information, will not be permitted during any interview/presentation process and, therefore, Bidders must submit proposals that present their rates and other requested information as clearly and completely as possible.
2. **Scoring Weights and Process**
	1. **Scoring Weights:** The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each proposal meets the following criteria.

**Section I. Preliminary Information (No Points)**

 Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, Section I.

**Section II. Organization Qualifications and Experience (40 points)**

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, Section II.

**Section III. Proposed Services (35 points)**

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, Section III.

**Section IV. Cost Proposal (25 points)**

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, Section IV.

* 1. **Scoring Process:** For proposals that demonstrate meeting the eligibility requirements in Section I, the evaluation team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score Sections II & III above. Members of the evaluation team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections. Sections IV, the Cost Proposal, will be scored as described below.
	2. **Scoring the Cost Proposal:** The total cost proposed for conducting all the functions specified in the RFP will be assigned a score according to a mathematical formula. The lowest bid will be awarded 25 points. Proposals with higher bids values will be awarded proportionately fewer points calculated in comparison with the lowest bid.

The scoring formula is:

(Lowest submitted cost proposal / Cost of proposal being scored) x 25 = pro-rated score

No Best and Final Offers: The State of Maine will not seek or accept a best and final offer (BAFO) from any Bidder in this procurement process.  All Bidders are expected to provide their best value pricing with the submission of their proposal.

* 1. **Negotiations:** The Department reserves the right to negotiate with the awarded Bidder to finalize a contract. Such negotiations may not significantly vary the content, nature or requirements of the proposal or the Department’s Request for Proposal to an extent that may affect the price of goods or services requested. The Department reserves the right to terminate contract negotiations with an awarded Bidder who submits a proposed contract significantly different from the proposal they submitted in response to the advertised RFP. In the event that an acceptable contract cannot be negotiated with the highest ranked Bidder, the Department may withdraw its award and negotiate with the next-highest ranked Bidder, and so on, until an acceptable contract has been finalized. Alternatively, the Department may cancel the RFP, at its sole discretion.
1. **Selection and Award**
	1. The final decision regarding the award of the contract will be made by representatives of the Department subject to approval by the State Procurement Review Committee.
	2. Notification of conditional award selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
	3. Issuance of the RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to the RFP, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel or any other costs incurred by the Bidder.
	4. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or to make multiple awards.
2. **Appeal of Contract Awards**

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from the RFP may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in [5 M.R.S.A. § 1825-E](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/5/title5sec1825-E.html) and [18-554 Code of Maine Rules Chapter 120](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120).  The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of conditional contract award.

**PART VI CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION AND CONDITIONS**

1. **Contract Document**
	1. The awarded Bidder will be required to execute a State of Maine Service Contract with appropriate riders as determined by the issuing department.

The complete set of standard State of Maine Service Contract documents, along with other forms and contract documents commonly used by the State, may be found on the Division of Procurement Services’ website at the following link: [Division of Procurement Services Forms Page](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/forms)

* 1. Allocation of funds is final upon successful negotiation and execution of the contract, subject to the review and approval of the State Procurement Review Committee. Contracts are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Procurement Review Committee and funds are encumbered. No contract will be approved based on an RFP which has an effective date less than fourteen (14) calendar days after award notification to Bidders. (Referenced in the regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, [Chapter 110, § 3(B)(i)](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-110).)

This provision means that a contract cannot be effective until at least 14 calendar days after award notification.

* 1. The State recognizes that the actual contract effective date depends upon completion of the RFP process, date of formal award notification, length of contract negotiation, and preparation and approval by the State Procurement Review Committee. Any appeals to the Department’s award decision(s) may further postpone the actual contract effective date, depending upon the outcome. The contract effective date listed in the RFP may need to be adjusted, if necessary, to comply with mandated requirements.
	2. In providing services and performing under the contract, the awarded Bidder must act as an independent contractor and not as an agent of the State of Maine.
1. **Standard State Contract Provisions**
	1. Contract Administration

Following the award, a Contract Administrator from the Department will be appointed to assist with the development and administration of the contract and to act as administrator during the entire contract period. Department staff will be available after the award to consult with the awarded Bidder in the finalization of the contract.

* 1. Payments and Other Provisions

The State anticipates paying the Contractor on the basis of net 30 payment terms, upon the receipt of an accurate and acceptable invoice. An invoice will be considered accurate and acceptable if it contains a reference to the State of Maine contract number, contains correct pricing information relative to the contract, and provides any required supporting documents, as applicable, and any other specific and agreed-upon requirements listed within the contract that results from the RFP.

**PART VII LIST OF RFP APPENDICES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS**

**Appendix A** – Proposal Cover Page

**Appendix B** – Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification

**Appendix C** – Qualifications and Experience Form

**Appendix D** – Cost Proposal Form

**Appendix E** – Submitted Question Form

**Appendix F** – Document to Review

**APPENDIX A**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Economic & Community Development**

**PROPOSAL COVER PAGE**

**RFP# 202405101**

**Blue Economy Task Force Project Management and Subject Matter Expertise**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Bidder’s Organization Name:** |  |
| **Chief Executive - Name/Title:** |  |
| **Tel:** |  | **E-mail:** |  |
| **Headquarters Street Address:** |  |
| **Headquarters City/State/Zip:** |  |
| ***(Provide information requested below if different from above)*** |
| **Lead Point of Contact for Proposal - Name/Title:** |  |
| **Tel:** |  | **E-mail:** |  |
| **Headquarters Street Address:** |  |
| **Headquarters City/State/Zip:** |  |

* This proposal and the pricing structure contained herein will remain firm for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
* No personnel currently employed by the Department or any other State agency participated, either directly or indirectly, in any activities relating to the preparation of the Bidder’s proposal.
* No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the Bidder to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal.
* The above-named organization is the legal entity entering into the resulting contract with the Department if they are awarded the contract.
* The undersigned is authorized to enter contractual obligations on behalf of the above-named organization.

*To the best of my knowledge, all information provided in the enclosed proposal, both programmatic and financial, is complete and accurate at the time of submission.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name (Print):** | **Title:** |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** |

**APPENDIX B**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Economic & Community Development**

**DEBARMENT, PERFORMANCE, and NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATION**

**RFP# 202405101**

**Blue Economy Task Force Project Management and Subject Matter Expertise**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Bidder’s Organization Name:** |  |

*By signing this document, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the aforementioned organization, its principals and any subcontractors named in this proposal:*

1. *Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, and declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from bidding or working on contracts issued by any governmental agency.*
2. *Have not within three years of submitting the proposal for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:*
	1. *Fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state, or local government transaction or contract.*
	2. *Violating Federal or State antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.*
3. *Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or Local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification.*
4. *Have not within a three (3) year period preceding this proposal had one or more federal, state, or local government transactions terminated for cause or default*.
5. *Have not entered into a prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a response for the same materials, supplies, equipment, or services and this proposal is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. The above-mentioned entities understand and agree that collusive bidding is a violation of state and federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name (Print):** | **Title:** |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** |

**APPENDIX C**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Economic & Community Development**

## QUALIFICATIONS and EXPERIENCE FORM

**RFP# 202405101**

**Blue Economy Task Force Project Management and Subject Matter Expertise**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Bidder’s Organization Name:** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Present a brief statement of qualifications. Describe the history of the Bidder’s organization, especially regarding skills pertinent to the specific work required by the RFP and any special or unique characteristics of the organization which would make it especially qualified to perform the required work activities. You may expand this form and use additional pages to provide this information.** |
|  |

**APPENDIX C (continued)**

|  |
| --- |
| **Provide a description of projects that occurred within the past five years which reflect experience and expertise needed in performing the functions described in Part II – Scope of Services to be Provided of the RFP. Please note that contract history with the State of Maine, whether positive or negative, may be considered in rating proposals even if not provided by the Bidder.** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Project One** |
| **Client Name:** |  |
| **Client Contact Person:** |  |
| **Telephone:** |  |
| **E-Mail:** |  |
| **Brief Description of Project** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Project Two** |
| **Client Name:** |  |
| **Client Contact Person:** |  |
| **Telephone:** |  |
| **E-Mail:** |  |
| **Brief Description of Project** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Project Three** |
| **Client Name:** |  |
| **Client Contact Person:** |  |
| **Telephone:** |  |
| **E-Mail:** |  |
| **Brief Description of Project** |
|  |

**APPENDIX D**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Economic & Community Development**

**COST PROPOSAL FORM**

**RFP# 202405101**

**Blue Economy Task Force Project Management and Subject Matter Expertise**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Bidder’s Organization Name:** |  |
| **Tasks #1-5 Cost** | **$** |
| **Deliverables #1-6 Cost** | **$** |
| **Subcontractor Costs** | **$** |
| **Travel and other expenses not captured above – please list details** | **$** |
| **Proposed Total Cost:** | **$** |

**Please note: When determining Cost Score during the evaluation of this RFP, only Proposed Total Cost above will be used to determine the score.**

 **APPENDIX E**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Economic & Community Development**

**SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

**RFP# 202405101**

**Blue Economy Task Force Project Management and Subject Matter Expertise**

This form should be used by Bidders when submitting written questions to the RFP Coordinator as defined in Part III of the RFP.

If a question is not related to any section of the RFP, enter “N/A” under the RFP Section & Page Number. Add additional rows as necessary.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organization Name:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
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**APPENDIX F**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Economic & Community Development**

**RFP# 202405101**

**Blue Economy Task Force Project Management and Subject Matter Expertise**

**Documents to Review:**

* State of Maine Resolve, to Establish the Blue Economy Task Force to Support Maine’s Emergence as a Center for Blue Economy Innovation and Opportunity in the 21st Century

Link: <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=SP0523&item=5&snum=131>

* State of Maine Economic Development Strategy:

<https://www.maine.gov/decd/strategic-plan>