

Request for Information

Maine Forest Economy Growth Initiative

Global Market Analysis and Benchmarking

Issue Date: May 18, 2017

Closing Date: June 9, 2017

Part 1. Background

1.1 Committee Overview

We are a consortium of forest industry organizations that are working together to develop a long-term Vision & Roadmap for Maine's Forest products sector, including the:

- Maine Forest Products Council
- Professional Logging Contractors of Maine
- Maine Woodland Owners
- State of Maine
- University of Maine, led by the Center for Research on Sustainable Forests
- Maine Development Foundation.

This consortium will help industry and government leaders work together to develop a common long-term vision for the sector by identifying the key opportunities that must be captured, key challenges that must be met, and key obstacles that must be overcome to develop greater economic prosperity in the forest products sector across the State.

The Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC) has been awarded a federal grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration for the project. The Global Market Analysis and Benchmarking is a critical component.

1.2 Background

Rapid change in marketplace demand for paper has led to the recent closure of five pulp and paper mills and two biomass electric facilities. Between 2014 and 2016, the total economic impact of the forest products industry fell from \$9.8 billion to \$8.5 billion, and more than 5,000 jobs were lost. Maine has lost 50 percent of its softwood pulp market in the last two years.

1.3 Purpose of the RFI

The purpose of this RFI is to allow the Committee to assess supplier responses and use the resultant assessments in future decision making in regard to supply of the Opportunity. While it is the intent of the Committee to compare supplier responses for the purposes of understanding service offerings and pre-qualification and possible short listing for further consideration, the Committee makes no obligations or undertakings in any way to:

- a) go to tender; or
- b) accept any RFI information received from suppliers; or
- c) include suppliers responding to this RFI in any future tender invitation; or
- d) any other commitment to suppliers whatsoever, including any intention to form a contract with any supplier for provision of the Opportunity.

1.4 Opportunity

Maine forest industries need to better understand emerging and potential markets for forest products, and match that with Maine's forest resource on both short term and long term time horizons with particular focus on the utilization of softwood pulp and biomass. A better understanding of global markets will create opportunities for new and expanded forest products businesses, a more diversified forest economy, high value exports, and increased jobs and wages. Global forces in the forest industry are affecting northeast markets and to plan Maine's future, we need to identify market trends and manufacturing opportunities that complement our species mix and current mill capacities. Maine cannot compete with short rotation eucalyptus in South America, but what market opportunities exist in the world for products manufactured from our unique spruce-fir forests? What opportunities are there to create higher value products such as bio-oil, bio-plastics, or nano cellulose from woody biomass? Are there opportunities for Maine to sell carbon credits? This initiative will identify the top forest product opportunities for Maine to pursue that will form the framework of the strategic industry plan.

Capital is being invested in competing regions of the world and Maine needs to understand through benchmarking of resource and business factors what are the elements of building an effective forest economy and attracting capital to rural Maine. This competitive analysis benchmarking study should compare Maine to other forest industry states, provinces and countries (e.g. wood fiber availability and cost, cost of energy, workforce development, environmental review and permitting, taxation, SWOT analysis of logistics infrastructure, influence of R&D on capital investment, state economic development incentives, and policy drivers at the state and federal level). This task will identify Maine's competitive strengths as well as the areas where improvement is necessary so that we can develop specific actions to leverage strengths and address weaknesses as part of the industry strategic plan.

Part 2. Instructions

2.1 Key Dates

Kindly acknowledge your intention to respond to this RFI by sending an "Intention to Participate" email to Sarah Curran at scurran@mdf.org by **May 22, 2017**.

Any questions regarding the RFI should be submitted to the committee contact email address **no later than June 1, 2017**.

All responses to this RFI are due no later than **June 9, 2017 by 5 pm**. Any responses received after this date and time will not be considered.

2.2 Committee Contact

The following individual is the contact for the RFI:

Sarah Curran, Program Director for the Maine Forest Economy Growth Initiative

Phone: (207) 622-6345

Email: scurran@mdf.org

2.3 Questions

Suppliers are to direct any questions regarding the RFI content or process to the RFI contact. All questions should be submitted to the nominated email address during the RFI question period indicated above. The Committee may choose to convey responses to submitted questions to all suppliers so that each is equally informed.

2.4 Response Methods

Suppliers must submit their response in the following method:

- a) By email to: scurran@mdf.org. The subject heading of the email shall be **Maine Forest Economy Growth Initiative Global Market Analysis and Benchmarking RFI**. Only electronic copies are to be submitted in PDF format and suppliers may submit multiple emails (suitably annotated – ex. Email 1 of 3) if attached files are deemed too large to suit a single email transmission.
- b) Size of emailed tender not to exceed 15MB.
- c) MFEGI will confirm receipt of bids as they arrive with a confirmation email to sender.

2.5 Suppliers to Inform Themselves

The Committee has taken all reasonable care to ensure that the RFI is accurate; however the Committee gives no representation or warranty as to the accuracy or sufficiency of the contained information.

2.6 Costs of Preparing the Response

All costs relating to the preparation and submission of a response are the sole responsibility of the supplier. The Committee shall not pay the supplier, wholly or in part, for its response.

2.7 Confidentiality

Except as required for the preparation of a response, suppliers must not, without the Committee's prior written consent, disclose to any third party any of the contents of the RFI documents. Suppliers must ensure that their employees, consultants and agents also are bound and comply with this condition of confidentiality.

2.8 Acceptance of these Conditions

Suppliers, by submitting a response to this RFI, are deemed to have acknowledged and agreed to the conditions set out in this RFI.

Part 3. Information to be Provided

All responses must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company.

The following is the minimum information suppliers are required to provide to the Committee. If this information, or any additional information, is available on your website please provide the address to enable us to undertake further analysis.

3.1 Supplier Details

- a) Supplier name (Trading and Registered), registered address.
- b) Details of supplier operating locations.
- c) Supplier ownership information.
- d) Relationships with any parent company (if applicable).
- e) Details of joint venture arrangements (if applicable).

3.2 Supplier Capabilities and Experience

- a) A description of the core supplier business, listing relevant case studies or examples (a maximum of three) that support this description. Where possible, include case studies that may relate to activities consistent with the Opportunity. Within necessary boundaries of confidentiality, please be as specific as possible.
- b) Additional services, products and works provided outside of your core business.
- c) Describe why you would be uniquely qualified to meet or exceed the requirements of this study.
- d) If you have conducted similar projects, please indicate other factors that the committee should consider exploring in order to get the best result. Provide examples of similar work that you have done and what was included.

3.3 Certifications and Awards

- a) Details of all certifications held (ex. ISO 9001) including date of last certification and details of the certifying body (copies of certifications may be appended to your response).
- b) Details of any recent external corporate awards, including the awarding body, if relevant to the Opportunity.

3.4 Other Information

- a) Please include any information that will enable the Committee to understand how the supplier will provide services to address the Opportunity. This should include examples of similar previous work done by the supplier.
- b) What information would be required by the supplier from the Committee to be able to submit pricing?
- c) Please provide 3 relevant references including contact information.
- d) Any further information/opportunities you believe the Committee may require in support of its RFI review activities.

No contracts shall be made with parties listed on the General Services Administration's List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement or Nonprocurement Programs. All necessary steps will be taken to solicit participation of locally-owned, minority-owned, female-owned and small businesses.

We plan to schedule one hour conference call meetings with each supplier to review the submitted information and provide the opportunity for the supplier to provide additional background relevant to this project.