

# Request for Proposals

**Maine Forest Economy Growth Initiative**

*Strategic Plan for the Forest Products Industry*

**Issue Date: December 8, 2017**

**Closing Date: January 10, 2018**

## **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 and key challenges that must be met 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.

### **1.2 Background**

Rapid change in marketplace demand for paper has led to the recent closure of five pulp and paper mills and the periodic idling of 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.

This project will identify Maine's forest product market capabilities and competitiveness, and quantify Maine's future wood supply to develop a Vision & Roadmap for Maine's future forest products economy. The Vision & Roadmap will identify the key opportunities that must be captured and key challenges that must be met to develop greater economic prosperity in the forest products sector across the State. The results will encourage private investment in industrial, commercial, and other economic development in this important regional industry.

### **1.3 Purpose of the RFP**

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit competitive bids for a Strategic Plan.

The EDA-approved total budget for the Vision and Roadmap for Maine's Forest Products Sector, which includes several initiatives including global market analysis and wood supply modeling, is \$1.25 million.

## 1.4 Project Scope

*We envision a thriving and diverse forest products industry that provides good jobs in vibrant rural Maine communities.*

Goal 1. Sustain Maine’s existing forest products businesses.

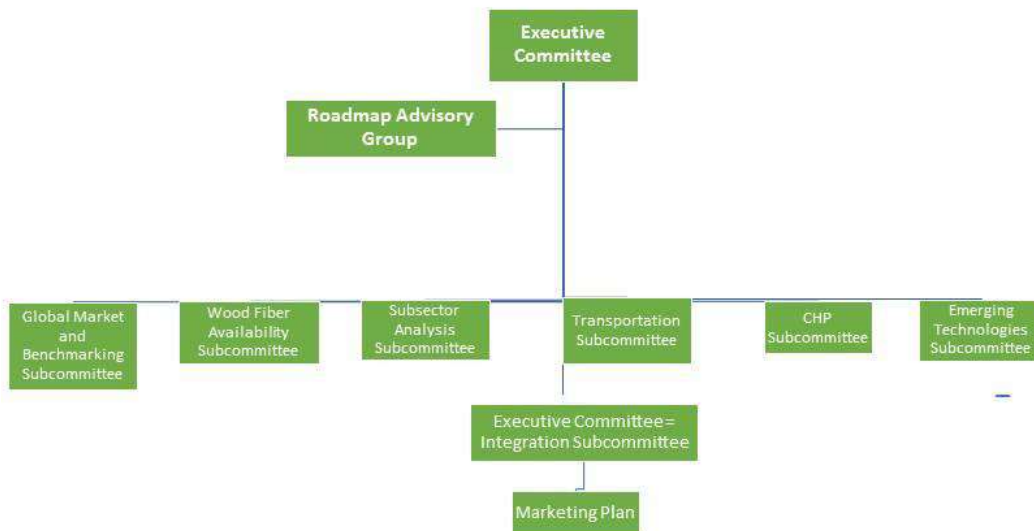
Goal 2. Attract capital investments and develop greater economic prosperity in the forest products sector across the State for both existing and new businesses.

Goal 3. Support the revitalization of Maine’s rural communities as places where people want to live, work and visit.

The Roadmap Executive Committee is soliciting bids for a consultant to integrate the findings of the Roadmap effort into a plan to make Maine’s forest products sector more competitive globally and grow jobs in the forest economy and rural Maine.

Each Roadmap subcommittee has a specific scope of work, described below. Subcommittees are responsible to ensure right questions are being asked, solicit and select consultants, and monitor work progress and provide feedback. The Executive Committee is responsible for the integration and development of the Vision and Roadmap, as well as overall management of the process and project leadership. The Roadmap advisory committee will be convened to facilitate buy in and support by a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including but not limited to industry.

Roadmap and Vision for Maine’s Forest Sector



- **Global Market and Benchmarking Committee:** conducting a global market analysis to 1) identify potential markets that best match Maine’s forest and other resources with a focus on the utilization of softwood fiber and biomass quality chips; and 2) identify Maine’s competitive advantages/disadvantages in the most promising markets. Results expected by early 2018.
- **Wood Fiber Availability Committee:** modeling what species are available for manufacturers and predicting long-range supplies with a variety of wood demand scenarios. Large capital investment in the forest industry requires long-term planning and understanding of forest growth dynamics. Analysis of species availability by region will be complete in fall 2017, and prediction of long range supplies with a variety of wood demand scenarios in 2018.
- **Transportation Committee:** identifying the necessary transportation infrastructure investments to increase margins for the forest products value chain, attract investment, and grow the forest products industry in Maine. Conducting a transportation survey of industry in the fall 2017, to be updated annually.
- **Wood Energy Committee:** conducting a cost-benefit analysis to support and grow markets for low-value underutilized wood and biomass, utilizing state-of-the-art CHP (Combined Heat and Power) wood energy plants, microgrids, and modern thermal systems. Results expected in winter 2018.
- **Emerging Technologies Committee:** developing an approach to assist with funding due diligence and vetting of emerging technologies and opportunities for the industry and communities. Vetting process developed in fall 2017, currently forming site visit team to respond to and recruit opportunities.
- **Stakeholder Analysis:** conducting interviews and focus groups to assess perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- **Executive Committee:** integrating the above results into a strategy and implementation plan for Maine’s forest products industry starting in spring 2018, including marketing and policy recommendations.

The Vision and Roadmap for Maine’s forest products industry will attract the capital investment that will be needed to capture emerging opportunities in the global forest and wood products economy.

The Vision and Roadmap will include specific strategies to position Maine for success within growing global forest products markets that match underutilized forest resources and economic advantages. How can Maine leverage our competitive advantages? How do we improve the investment landscape to attract forest products investment and better focus our forest business

recruitment and expansion efforts? The Vision and Roadmap will identify important recommendations to policy makers, industry members and government officials to build a strong long-term forest industry and to improve the image of Maine's forest products industry.

Specifically, we have identified the following project scope for the consultant:

1. Identify best practices and relevant lessons from case studies in North America and globally within the past 20 years where forest industry expansion and growth has been achieved.
2. Work with the Roadmap subcommittees to ensure that sufficient data is collected in order to develop a robust plan. Each subcommittee has a specific scope of work. It will be the role of this consultant to integrate the findings and recommendations of each subcommittee.
3. Plan and facilitate a stakeholder event where the Roadmap advisory committee will hear findings presentations by subcommittee consultants and be invited to provide feedback and generate ideas.
4. Work with the Roadmap Executive Committee to develop a strong Vision and Roadmap that identifies the key opportunities that must be captured and key challenges that must be met to develop greater economic prosperity in the forest products sector across the State.
5. Develop goals and a timeline to achieve them, including specific short-term and long term actions with clear accountability.
6. Produce the draft and final Vision and Roadmap documents for the Executive Committee.
7. Produce documents suitable for presentation to public audiences.

The contractor or team should have a demonstrated track record of carrying out the following:

- Successful facilitation of strategic planning processes with industry and government partnerships to develop sustainable economic growth in a given sector.
- Familiarity with both policy levers and corporate decision making processes.
- Experience working with policy makers at the Town, State, and Federal levels.
- Creative solutions including new ideas and innovative approaches.
- Skilled writing to communicate with industry, public and policymaker audiences.

## **Part 2. Instructions**

### **2.1 Key Dates**

Any questions regarding the RFP should be submitted to the committee contact email address no later than December 22, 2017.

All responses to this RFP are due no later than 5 pm on January 10, 2018. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered.

### **2.2 Committee Contact**

The following individual is the contact for the RFP:

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

Phone: (207) 622-6345

Email: [scurran@mdf.org](mailto:scurran@mdf.org)

### **2.3 Questions**

Suppliers are to direct any questions regarding the RFP content or process to the RFP contact. All questions should be submitted to the nominated email address during the RFP 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 Proposal Methods**

Suppliers must submit their response in the following method:

- a) By email to: [scurran@mdf.org](mailto:scurran@mdf.org). The subject heading of the email shall be **Maine Forest Economy Growth Initiative Strategic Plan RFP**. 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.**

### **2.5 Proposal Requirements**

This request for proposals represents the requirements for an open and competitive process under federal guidelines for procurement by competitive proposal. In competitive proposal procurement, the proposal that is most advantageous to the program is selected, considering both price and other factors.

Proposals will be received until 5 pm on January 10, 2018. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company submitting the proposal.

Proposals must include the timeframe for deliverables and overall completion of this project.

If the organization submitting the proposal must outsource or contract any work to meet the requirements herein, this must be clearly stated in the proposal. Additionally, all costs included in the proposal must be all-inclusive to include any outsourced or contracted work. Any proposals which call for outsourcing or contracted work must include a name and description of the organizations being contracted. All costs included in the proposal must be itemized to include an explanation of all costs and fees.

Contract terms will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to legal review by MFPC's attorney and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

Bidders must return a completed copy of form CD-512, available at [http://ci.noaa.gov/sites/lci/Documents/Forms/funding\\_forms\\_CD-512.pdf](http://ci.noaa.gov/sites/lci/Documents/Forms/funding_forms_CD-512.pdf) with their bid.

## **2.6 Project Budget**

All proposals must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the scope of work. All costs and fees must be clearly described in the proposal. Contracts will consist of time and materials budgets with a not-to-exceed ceiling price. Proposals should include a breakdown of cost and hours for each task of the scope of work.

## **2.7 Bidder Qualifications**

All bidders should provide the following information as part of their proposal for consideration:

### **Personnel**

- Anticipated personnel you will assign to this project (name, title, brief summary of their academic background and professional experience) and description of what their role in this project will be

For Bidders who did not participate in the RFI: Bidders who did not participate in the Strategic Planning RFI (issued September 21, 2017) should also provide the following items as part of their proposal for consideration. (Bidders who participated in the Strategic Planning RFI do not need to provide the following items again.)

### **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).

### **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.

### **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.

### **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) Please provide 3 relevant references including contact information.
- d) Any further information/opportunities you believe the Committee may require

## **2.8 Suppliers to inform themselves**

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

## **2.9 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.

## **2.10 Confidentiality**

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

## **2.11 Acceptance of these Conditions**

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



## **Part 3. Proposal Evaluation**

### **3.1 Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

All proposals received in advance of the solicitation deadline will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Overall proposal suitability (20 points): Proposal must meet the scope and needs included here and be presented in a clear and organized manner
- Organizational experience (20 points): bidders will be evaluated on their experience as it pertains to the scope of this project
- Previous work (20 points): bidders will be evaluated on the examples of previous projects completed successfully and the references of past clients of these projects
- Value and cost (20 points): bidders will be evaluated on the cost of their analysis based on the work to be performed in accordance with the scope of this project
- Expertise and experience (20 points): bidders will be evaluated on the documentation of their staff's expertise and experience
- Additional consideration will be given to such matters as contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources or accessibility to other resources to ensure successful project completion (10 points)

Non-response bids or proposals (i.e. those with material deficiencies, omissions, errors, or inconsistencies) will not be considered.

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.

The committee may choose to conduct interviews with the respondents.

A contract will be made in writing to the proposal which is most advantageous to the program considering the evaluation criteria specified. This will be the finalist with the highest score assigned by the review committee.

## Appendix: Maine Forest Products Council Non-Construction Federal Contracting Terms for the EDA Award

### For all contracts:

#### General terms:

1. Language that allows the Maine Forest Products Council the opportunity to cancel any contract for cause. Said cause shall include (but not be limited to): demonstrated lack of ability to perform the work specified, unwillingness to complete the work in a timely fashion, cancellation of liability insurance or worker's compensation, failure to pay suppliers or workers, unsafe working conditions caused by the contractor, failure to comply with laws, failure to keep accurate and timely records of the job, or failure to make those records available to the Maine Forest Products Council (on request) or any other documented matter which could cause a hardship for the organization if a claim should arise or the work not be completed on schedule at the specified cost. Contracts shall specify the process for cancellation and the basis for settlement.
2. Provisions or conditions that allow for administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances in which a contractor violates or breaches the contract terms, and provide for such remedial actions, sanctions, and penalties as may be appropriate.
3. Provisions for termination by the recipient, including the manner by which termination shall be effected and the basis for settlement. In addition, contracts shall describe conditions under which the contract may be terminated for default as well as conditions where the contract may be terminated because of circumstances beyond the control of the contractor.
4. Provision that the Maine Forest Products Council shall have access to any books, documents, papers and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to a specific program for audits, examinations, excerpts and transcriptions.

#### Specific Terms:

- A. Maine Forest Products Council is making this agreement utilizing funding awarded under project number 01-69-14749 from the Economic Development Agency of the United States Department of Commerce under its Economic Adjustment Assistance Program (CDFA 11.307). *Contractor* is considered a contractor under this Federal award.
- B. This agreement is subject to Subpart C of Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 180, "OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement)," as well as the Department of Commerce's implementing regulations at 2 CFR 1326. *Contractor* warrants it and its principals are not currently disbarred, suspended, or otherwise restricted (including but not limited to inclusion on restricted foreign entities or terrorism watch lists) from accepting federal funds or funds from the State of Maine or any locality within the State of Maine. *Contractor* will adhere to the

requirements of 2 CFR 180 and 2 CFR 1326 in any subcontracts issued to complete this Agreement.

- C. *Contractor*, a non-Federal entity receiving a DOC financial assistance award must, in addition to the assurances made as part of the application, comply and require each of its contractors and subcontractors employed in the completion of the project to comply with all applicable statutes, regulations, executive orders (E.O.s), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars, provisions of the OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200) (OMB Uniform Guidance), provisions of these Standard Terms, any other incorporated terms and conditions, and approved applications.”
- D. *Contractor* will comply with the provisions of the Fly America Act (49 U.S.C. § 40118) and its implementing regulations at 41 C.F.R. §§ 301-10.131 through 301-10.143.
- E. This agreement is NOT for construction and will NOT involve the employment of mechanics or laborers and is therefore exempt from the requirements of the Davis-Bacon Act and Related Acts.
- F. It is the intention of the parties that this work will NOT result in inventions or innovations that would be eligible for patents. In the event that appears possible, the parties will negotiate in good faith additional terms and adhere to the requirements of 37 CFR 401 and relevant regulations promulgated by the Department of Commerce.
- G. This work will NOT involve Human Subject Research as defined in 15 CFR Part 27 and will NOT involve research with vertebrate animals.
- H. The Copeland “Anti-Kickback” Act (18 U.S.C. § 874), prohibits a person or organization engaged in a federally supported project from enticing an employee working on the project from giving up a part of his compensation under an employment contract. The Copeland “Anti-Kickback” Act also applies to contractors and subcontractors pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 3145.
- I. *Contractor* must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus areas firms are used for subcontracts under this award when possible. The Minority Business Development Agency within the DOC will assist entities in matching qualified minority business enterprises with contract opportunities. For further information visit MBDA's website at <http://www.mbda.gov>.
- J. *Contractor* agrees to comply with all applicable standards, orders or regulations issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401-7671q) and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251-1387). Violations must be reported to the Department of Commerce and the Regional Office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- K. Pursuant to E.O. 13043 (62 FR 19217, 1997), non-Federal entities should encourage employees and contractors to enforce on-the-job seat belt policies

and programs when operating company-owned, rented, or personally owned vehicles.

- L. This agreement is subject to a pilot program for whistleblower protection in accordance with National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 (Pub. L. No. 112-239, enacted January 2, 2013 and codified at 41 U.S.C. § 4712).

In accordance with 41 U.S.C. § 4712, an employee of a non-Federal entity or contractor under a Federal award or subaward may not be discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against as a reprisal for disclosing to a person or body information that the employee reasonably believes is evidence of gross mismanagement of a Federal award, subaward, or a contract under a Federal award or subaward, a gross waste of Federal funds, an abuse of authority relating to a Federal award or subaward or contract under a Federal award or subaward, a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, or a violation of law, rule, or regulation related to a Federal award, subaward, or contract under a Federal award or subaward. These persons or bodies include:

- a. A Member of Congress or a representative of a committee of Congress.
- b. An Inspector General.
- c. The Government Accountability Office.
- d. A Federal employee responsible for contract or grant oversight or management at the relevant agency.
- e. An authorized official of the Department of Justice or other law enforcement agency.
- f. A court or grand jury.
- g. A management official or other employee of the contractor, subcontractor, or grantee who has the responsibility to investigate, discover, or address misconduct.

Non-Federal entities and contractors under Federal awards and subawards shall inform their employees in writing of the rights and remedies provided under 41 U.S.C. § 4712, in the predominant native language of the workforce.

**For contracts greater than or equal to \$10,000:**

General term: Must contain language allowing the Maine Forest Products Council to cancel for its convenience, and specify the mechanism for settlement.

**For contracts greater than to equal to \$100,000:**

Specific Terms:

- A. *Contractor* is subject to 31 U.S.C § 1352, as implemented at 15 C.F.R. Part 28, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." *Contractor* certifies that it will not and has not used Federal appropriated funds to pay any person or organization for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any Federal contract, grant or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. 1352. *Contractor* shall submit a completed Form SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," regarding the use of non-Federal funds for lobbying upon execution of this agreement. Additional Form SF-LLL shall be submitted within 15 days following the end of the calendar quarter in which there occurs any event that requires disclosure or that materially affects the accuracy of the information contained in any disclosure form previously filed. This provision must also flow-down to and apply to any subcontractors receiving \$100,000 or more.