

AMENDMENT 1

RELEVANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR ECONOMIC STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESEARCH SERVICES

This document contains all of the relevant questions received in writing prior to the October 30, 2007 deadline for written questions and at the November 8, 2007 Proposers Conference and the Department of Economic and Community Development's responses regarding the Request for Proposal for Economic Strategic Planning and Research Services. This document amends the Request for Proposal for Economic Strategic Planning and Research Services released on October 17, 2007.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) received the following question regarding the proposers conference:

- Can firms participate in the pre-bid proposers' conference via conference call?
- Will the attendance list of attendees at the Bidders' Conference be made available to all attendees?

DECD Response:

Proposer's may not participate in the bidders conference via conference call. Per the RFP, the answers to questions received in writing prior to due date for questions or posed at the bidders conference will be posted on the DECD website no later than close of business November 13, 2007. The list of attendees to the proposer's conference will be included in this posting.

DECD received the following question regarding the due date of the RFP:

- We note that the RFP due date is Monday, November 26, which immediately follows the long Thanksgiving holiday weekend when many people travel out of town to be with family. In light of this, we wonder if your agency would be willing to consider extending the deadline modestly to the following Friday the 30th of November?
- When will DECD have a final decision on the deadlines of submission?
- If there is any change on the dates, how will the proposers be notified?

DECD Response:

DECD has elected to extend the due date for proposals from 4:00 P.M. EST, November 26, 2007 to 4:00 P.M. EST, November 29, 2007. As a result of this change additional dates within the RFP have been affected and therefore revised. See revisions below. DECD still anticipates the start of the contract to be on or about mid-January of 2008.

Additional Revised Dates:

- 4:00 P.M., EST November 29, 2007 Proposals Due
- 4:00 P.M., EST December 14, 2007 Proposer Presentation Notification

- December 19, 2007

Proposer Presentations (if necessary)

Proposers conference participants and those individuals that submitted written questions will be emailed a copy of the questions and answers which includes the revised RFP schedule.

DECD received the following questions regarding the budget for this RFP:

- Is there a proposed budget or budget range associated with the Economic Strategic Planning & Research Services project?
- Can you by chance advise us with regard to the budget allocation for this project, as we would like to submit a proposal in partnership with a Connecticut based associate?
- Our budget will depend on many answers to detailed questions... We are not clear whether some of these pass through charges should appear in our budget or DECD (i.e. Focus group participation reimbursement cost, mailing list distribution list, facility costs, transcription service, tv ads, etc.) Would showing the line item and referencing that we would pass the charge on to you be adequate?
- Does DECD anticipate the budget for this project is ample enough to include inducements for individuals who participate in focus groups?
- Does DECD have the budget range for this project?
- Regarding the 10% set-aside small/minority owned businesses; will the agency select pieces of services from various consultants who responded to the RFP for consideration?
- Task 5: How can the proposers set the budget for each task required?

DECD Response:

Proposers have been asked to prepare a cost proposal for each task appearing in the RFP. DECD may elect to contract for all or some of the tasks from the selected consultant.

No costs are to be passed directly to DECD. DECD expects proposers to include all of the costs associated with the execution and completion of each task appearing in the RFP to be outlined in their cost proposals. If a proposer believes a cost is necessary for the execution and completion of a task, they should include it.

With regard to pricing Task 5 of the RFP, proposers should itemize to the level of detail they feel is necessary to adequately respond - i.e. provide a cost for each different activity listed in Task 5 of the RFP.

DECD received the following questions regarding the Cost Proposal Form - Form F1 - for this RFP:

- With regard to the Cost Proposal form (Form F1), not all consultants price using the direct labor and overhead rate method represented in the form. Are we seeking proposals from those firms that do not price that way or just the ones that do?

- Is there any objection to putting the budget form on excel?

DECD Response:

DECD encourages all eligible proposers to submit proposals. If a proposer does not normally price in the fashion outlined in Form F1, they should consider doing so in this case. If it is not possible for them to do so, they are still encouraged to submit a proposal with the condition that they use Form F1 and indicate on the form that overhead is included in the direct labor charge and provide an explanation as to how the rates were calculated. Please note that cost proposals prepared in this fashion, though accepted, will be penalized in the evaluation process.

DECD will post the Cost Proposal Form (Form F1) on the DECD website in excel form.

DECD received the following questions regarding financial statements required under section VIII. C. d. of this RFP:

- If the proposer has only one audit statement, would it be acceptable? Is there any specific format required?
- About the audited statements, can this be clarified in the Q&A that will be sent out on Nov. 13?

DECD Response:

If the proposer is a firm or corporation, include the two (2) most recent annual financial statements prepared by an independent Certified Public Accountant, and reviewed or audited in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (USA). If a proposer has been in business for less than two years, such proposer must include any financial statements prepared by a Certified Public Accountant, and reviewed or audited in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (USA) for the entire existence of such firm or corporation.

Proposers that cannot meet the aforementioned requirement may substitute tax returns for the firm or for the owners of the business for the years for which audited statements are not available and will certify that no audited statements for those years exist.

DECD received the following questions regarding the timeline appearing in the RFP:

- Please clarify the dates for Part II (Scope of Services), Section 1 (Consultation, Outreach and Public Input) and Part VI (RFP Procedures), Paragraph N (Timeline). According to the Timeline, the contract is to start on January 14, 2008. In reading Section 1, the initial consultation meetings are to be completed by January 23, 2008 and a draft consultation report is due a January 30. The timeline for surveys and focus groups are also short, as they are scheduled to be completed February 19th and 25th, respectively. These are extremely short timeframes from the projected start of the project and notice to proceed. Is this your intent? Or, were some of these dates changed without coordinating the schedule shift throughout the RFP?
- In light of the heavy load of overlapping upfront tasks, to what extent is the overall timeline as well as task timelines negotiable?

- Can the order of tasks be adjusted with the approval of DECD in consultation with the vendor, i.e. conduct consultation with state agencies and other stakeholders, then focus groups, then surveys in order that previous activities feed in and shape those that follow in a manner to optimize the value of input received?
- Is the timeline in each segment open for reinterpretation?
- What if there is a delay in getting the contract approved by the AG office?
- When do we expect the contract to be awarded, any time frame?

DECD Response:

DECD acknowledges the fact that the timeline is aggressive. The due dates outlined in the RFP are not negotiable. Should delays occur as a result of action or inaction on the part of the state, the DECD may elect to adjust the timeline accordingly.

DECD received the following questions regarding the 10% set-aside requirement and the definition of minority owned business:

- Is it possible to get clarification on whether a Women-owned business (certified in CT as a DBE) satisfies the *Minority Owned Business* requirement?

The table of contents shows form F7 as Minority/Women-owned however pg-15 item D solely calls out *minority*.

- My question concerns paragraph "P" on page 10 of the proposal. I understand this paragraph to mean that the 10% minimum set-aside applies to a small business that is owned by an American Indian, Asian, Black or Hispanic; some one with heritage from Spain or Portugal; a woman owned business regardless of heritage; or a business owned by a disabled person(s), regardless of heritage. Is this correct? If not, how should Paragraph P be interpreted?
- Regarding Part VII (RFP Conditions), I understand this Paragraph P to mean that the 10% minimum set-aside applies to a small business that is owned by an American Indian, Asian, Black or Hispanic; some one with heritage from Spain or Portugal (Iberian Peninsula), a woman owned business regardless of heritage; or a business owned by a disabled person(s), also regardless of heritage. Is this correct? If not, how should Paragraph P and subsequent references to the set-aside in Parts VIII and IX be interpreted?

DECD Response:

The RFP uses the set-aside definitions established and maintained by the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS).

DAS defines a small business enterprise as a company who has:

- Been doing business under the same ownership or management and has maintained its principal place of business in Connecticut for at least one year immediately prior to the date of application;

- Gross revenues not exceeding \$10,000,000 during its most recent fiscal year; and;
- 51% ownership held by a person(s) who exercises the operational authority over daily affairs of the business and has the power to direct policies and management and receives beneficial interest of the business.

DAS defines a minority business enterprise as a business that meets the criteria as described for a small business enterprise with 51% percent of the ownership held by a person(s) of minority affiliation who exercises operational authority over the daily affairs of the business and has the power to direct policies and management and receives beneficial interests of the business.

DAS defines a minority as a(n):

- Black American, including all persons having origins in any of the Black African racial groups not of Hispanic origin;
- Hispanic American, including all persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race;
- Person having origins in the Iberian Peninsula, including Portugal, regardless of race;
- Woman;
- Asian Pacific American and Pacific islander;
- American Indian and persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and maintaining identifiable tribal affiliations through membership and participation or community identification; or
- An individual with a disability. "Individual with a disability" means an individual (A) having a physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the individual or (B) having a record of such impairment.

Note: *Woman* and *Individuals with a Disability* may be from any racial or ethnic group.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program - DBE

Connecticut companies certified by the Department of Transportation under the DOT's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program that also meet the state's Supplier Diversity Program's certification requirements are automatically eligible for certification by the Department of Administrative Services. However, some additional information may be required depending on the company's business structure. Businesses certified as DBEs should check with DAS to make sure that they meet the SBE and/ MBE requirements of the Supplier Diversity Program.

Another Important Consideration

Connecticut does not have any registration requirements in order for a company to participate in the competitive procurement process. However, in the case of competitive procurements issues with set-aside requirements, a company must have the required certification at the time of the solicitation due date.

Additional Information

Additional information regarding the state's set-aside requirements can be found at:

http://www.das.state.ct.us/Purchase/SetAside/OSD_FAQs.asp or by contacting Meg Yetishefsky of the DAS Office of Supplier Diversity at (860) 713-5236 or at Supplier.Diversity@ct.gov.

DECD received the following questions regarding surveys and focus groups:

- Does DECD intend to do any outreach/marketing/PR on focus groups, interviews etc. to maximize participation?
- Does DECD have a preferred survey methodology, i.e. phone vs. email vs. mail especially in light of timing and available funding considerations?
- Does "targeted surveys" mean shorter, more focused surveys or surveying smaller, more specific target groups or some combination of thereof?
- Do you have distribution mailing lists or would you expect us to purchase them?
- What methods of surveys would you consider:
 - a) Email
 - b) Mail
 - c) Telephone
 - d) Web based
- Who is the targeted audience for the surveys
 - a) Residents
 - b) Government, business and community leaders
 - c) Other
- What is the objective of the Focus Groups?
- Will the five focus groups be organized regionally, topically or by audience?
- Have you given any thought as to the number of attendees of the focus groups (not desirable to have over 20 per session)
- Will five focus groups give sufficient coverage?
- Survey time frame; is it a one-month turnaround?
- Do we have a prepared questionnaire? Or will we have one?
- Will DECD do the final sign-off on the questionnaire before using for the survey?

DECD Response:

DECD expects proposers to include in their bids all costs that they deem necessary to execute and complete each task appearing in the RFP. With regard to surveys and focus groups it is expected that proposers will include any and all costs associated with executing and completing this task.

DECD does not have a preferred survey methodology. DECD's only requirement is that the survey be "scientific" and statistically relevant. DECD expects proposers to clearly articulate the survey methodology they intend to employ as well as why they have chosen that particular methodology. DECD expects the proposer to conduct at least one survey of the general public and up to five smaller targeted surveys.

"Targeted surveys" mean smaller more focused surveys targeted at specific groups. For example a targeted survey could include but not be limited to a survey of Connecticut Chambers of Commerce, Connecticut Housing Authorities, Connecticut Economic Development Organizations, Connecticut Chief Elected Officials, Connecticut Business Associations, Connecticut Institutions of Higher Learning, etc.

DECD shall determine the survey targets, with input from the selected consultant. The selected consultant shall work with the DECD to develop appropriate survey questions. DECD shall have final sign-off on the survey questionnaire.

DECD expects the focus groups to complement, augment and/or provide greater depth/focus to the surveys. DECD expects proposers to provide within their response to the RFP their focus group methodology - including what they consider the optimal size and configuration of the group.

DECD shall determine the composition of the focus groups, with input from the selected consultant. The selected consultant shall work with the DECD to develop appropriate focus group questions. The selected consultant shall be responsible for all logistics relating to the focus groups.

The schedule for the surveys and focus groups provided in the RFP is correct.

DECD received the following questions regarding regional forums:

- Part II, Section 1A states: "The selected consultant may be responsible for all logistics related to conducting regional forums..." Part II, Section IVB states: "The selected consultant may be required to assist with any or all logistics related to conducting presentations. These contingency statements make preparing a budget difficult. Will you accept a separate logistics budget (Form FI) for time and materials that can be used in total or in part depending on the level of effort required under each of these Sections? Do you have a preference on how the budget be shown for handling meeting logistics that may or may not be required?"
- What are the overall objectives for the Regional Forums and how are they different from the focus groups?
- Is it intended that there will be specific considerations for each region within the overall plan, and the forums would bring together industry and community leaders to discuss the needs of their region, and potential impacts or impediments?
- In conducting the regional forums, who would be the targeted audience and how many people would be expected.
- Would you expect these meetings to occur at a conference center located in those counties or in a public building like a town hall, etc.?
- Would you expect these meeting be conducted after business hours?

- What advertising method would be expected (public notice in newspaper, direct mailing, radio/tv ads, etc.?)
- What type of advertising is being used to get people to come to the forums?
- Is there any set format for the Regional Forums? What will it be like?
- Budget for forum; is there accommodation or free compensation from the state agency location?
- How large of a group of participants expected to be at each Strategic Forum?
- Can we provide information about the location of the forum on Nov. 15?

DECD Response:

Given the aggressive timeline of the tasks outline in this RFP, DECD elected to undertake the regional forums itself. There are 10 regional forums scheduled across the state. The purpose of these forums is to solicit from members of the general public input into the development of a long-term strategy for Connecticut’s economy. All state residents will be urged to attend and provide oral or written comments on the regional and state economic development needs of Connecticut’s communities. A schedule of these forums is available on the DECD website.

Proposers must still provide a cost proposal for conducting regional forums (on a per forum basis) in case the department elects to hold additional forums. Proposers should provide as much detail as they deem necessary within their cost proposals. Proposers must assume that there will be a cost associated with renting a venue for any forums.

The potential turnout for the regional forums is unknown.

The format for any additional forums required by DECD will be determined by DECD in consultation with the selected consultant.

DECD received the following questions regarding reliance on legally required reports:

- In reviewing performance of economic, community and housing development entities, can consultant rely on reports legally required of those entities as a basis for evaluating their performance against their statutory obligations, responsibilities and mandates?

DECD Response:

DECD expects that proposers will use all of the reports legally required of those entities as a basis for evaluating their performance against their statutory obligations, responsibilities and mandates, however, the proposer should not rely solely on the aforementioned reports.

DECD received the following questions regarding consultation and stakeholder input:

- Does DECD foresee that representatives of the groups targeted in the consultation task act as an advisory group throughout the term of the project?

- Does DECD anticipate incorporating input from the private business sector as part of this work or reach out to groups such as the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors?
- Business input, will DECD be seeking input from businesses?
- What is the role of the Governor Economic Advisory Committee with regard to this RFP, will they have a role in Advising or Consulting?
- Will any Federal Agencies be involved in the input process? Should proposers include a provision to include them in the proposal?
- Will the State Legislatures and the Federal Agencies be invited to get involve in the Regional Forums?
- Is that included the State Chief Elected Official?

DECD Response:

DECD expects to rely on the various state agencies and quasi-public agencies enumerated in section four, subsection (a) of Pubic Act 07-239 for consultation as needed throughout the planning process. DECD will be seeking input from stakeholders through the regional forums, surveys and focus groups. Input and feedback collected through these channels will be incorporated into the development of the strategic plan. Stakeholders include all individuals and/or organizations that have a “stake” in the future of Connecticut’s economy.

DECD received the following questions regarding the availability of DECD resources:

- What resources of DECD will be made available to work with the vendor in support of completing the scope of work?

DECD Response:

DECD will provide guidance as necessary to assist the vendor with the execution and completion of the tasks appearing in the RFP.

DECD received the following questions regarding the Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005 – 2010:

- Is the base document for this proposal, and, if so, who participated in The Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005 – 2010? Was a consulting firm used and if so who?
- Is there a strategic planning committee and who resides on that committee? Have roles and responsibilities?

DECD Response:

The Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005 – 2010 is not the base document for the economic strategic plan outlined in this RFP. Per the RFP, the economic strategic plan must however be consistent with the Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005 – 2010 as well the Connecticut, Long-Range

State Housing Plan and the state Transportation Strategy adopted pursuant to section 13b-57g of the general statutes.

Proposers seeking additional information regarding the Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005 – 2010 should go to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management's website - <http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?A=2990&Q=385370>

DECD received the following questions regarding required forms and sub-consultants:

- In the Q&A, which will be sent out on Nov. 13, can DECD provide guidance of each form that must be completed by each sub-consultant?

DECD Response:

Forms F5 through and including F14 must be prepared by all sub-consultants as well as the primary consultant.

DECD received the following questions regarding letters of reference required by section VIII. C. e. of this RFP:

- Are we asking for the actual Letter of Reference?
- Do we require the Letter of Reference from the sub-consultant?
- With regard to the Letters of Reference, if the DECD or another state agency is a client, would a letter of reference from DECD or another state agency be accepted?

DECD Response:

DECD expects to receive as part of the submission package actual letters of reference.

DECD does not require that letters of reference be included for each sub-consultant. Three letters of reference are required only for the primary consultant.

The only requirement for the letters of reference is that they be from a current or former client of the proposer.

DECD received the following questions regarding the requirement to submit an electronic version of the proposal:

- How do we want the electronic proposal to be submitted?
- What portions of the proposal must be in Microsoft Word 2003 format? What about documents that were not originally prepared in Word, but need to be included in the proposal.

DECD Response:

Proposers should put the electronic version of their proposal on CD. The CD must be clearly marked and included in the submission package.

The main body of the proposal must be in Microsoft Word 2003. Attachments may be in PDF form (including organizational charts, financial statements, letters of reference, resumes, etc.).

Executed required forms should be scanned and included in PDF form.

The Cost Proposal form (Form F1) should be included in Microsoft Excel 2003 format.

DECD received the following questions regarding the state's standard contract language:

- Is a copy of the state's standard contract language available for the proposers to use as a guideline?

DECD Response:

The state's standards for Personal Services Agreements are available from the Office of Policy and Management's Office of Finance at the following web address:

http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2978&q=382978&opmNav_GID=1806

DECD received the following questions regarding job descriptions required under section VIII. C. d. of this RFP:

- Job description or classification of each job title, do we required each job title of the company or of the project?

DECD Response:

Proposers should provide the job title for each individual involved in the project along with a description of what the individual does within the firm and what they will be doing with regard to the project.

DECD received the following questions regarding other planning initiatives going on in the state and their connection to the RFP:

- Are there any other major planning initiatives going on in the state related to or part of this RFP?

DECD Response:

There are no other major planning initiatives going on in the state that are part of or directly related to this RFP.