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REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST, AVAILABILITY, QUALIFICATIONS, AND COST QUOTATIONS

PROJECT TITLE: Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River System Facilitation for ACF Stakeholders, Inc. Facilitation

Location: Alabama, Florida, Georgia within the ACF Basin

PROJECT SUMMARY

The ACF Stakeholders (ACFS) is soliciting proposals including expressions of interest, statements of qualifications, and cost quotations from highly skilled environmental conflict resolution practitioners (the candidate) with substantial Environmental Conflict Resolution skills to provide independent neutral facilitation services for Governing Board and Committee meetings. The nature of the program includes working with a diverse and large group of stakeholders, along with numerous state and federal agencies with interests in the ACF Basin.

The neutral services of one practitioner are being considered for facilitation and follow-up of 2 quarterly meetings of the 56 member Governing Board (GB) and other committee meetings as necessary. The Governing Board of ACFS may, at its sole discretion, decide to extend the relationship beyond the 2 remaining meetings in 2010.

INTRODUCTION

The states of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia have disagreed and litigated over the management of water resources in the ACF basin for several decades. In response, stakeholders throughout the basin decided to work together to seek solutions and resolutions to the many issues that exist regarding the waters of the ACF. The litigious nature of the disputes has not provided opportunities for open discussion with stakeholders of possible solutions or alternative management scenarios by engaged state and federal agencies. Facing frustration over the lack of progress and a worsening situation for stakeholders in the ACF Basin, interested parties collaborated to establish the ACF Stakeholders, Inc., (ACFS). A thorough review of the history, charter, make-up, operating guidelines and structure of the ACFS can be found at: <http://www.acfstakeholders.org/>. The ACFS endeavors to provide recommendations and guidance to 3 states, the federal government, and their numerous agencies with interests in the ACF Basin.

Within the past 2 years, stakeholders formed the ACFS organization to affect change and influence the future management of water resources in the basin. The organization's first year was spent organizing and developing a structure to take on the many issues that must be processed. The organization faces many challenges and is very diverse in its geographical representation and the types of interests. The 56 member Governing Board (GB) represents 14 defined interests in 4 geographic segments of the basin. The board is elected from the general membership. The board follows the standards set forth in the organizational Charter (see website). It also adheres to the adopted Operating Guidelines. The candidate selected for this work will

be required to facilitate the quarterly meetings of this board in accordance with the Charter and as set out by the executive, standing and special committees of the organization. It is essential that all respondents understand the importance of the Charter and Operating Guidelines and observe the absolute necessity of adhering to these defined organizational disciplines.

The ACFS has been assisted by the U.S. Institute of Environmental Conflict Resolution (ECR) to create, plan, design and facilitate meetings of the organization over the past 18 months on a temporary basis and ACFS is now in a position to select a long-term facilitator of its quarterly meetings.

Quarterly meetings are anticipated to be 2 days in duration and are located in various segments of the basin. The facilitator selection process will select an interim facilitator for the June 2010 meeting and with GB approval, select a facilitator for the 2 remaining quarterly meetings for 2010 including meeting preparation assistance that will be required through December of 2010. Facilitation services will also be required for committee and working group meetings over the remainder of 2010.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

The primary role of the facilitator will be to assist in facilitating and managing a process that consolidates the work to date of the ACFS Governing Board that will move the ACFS toward achieving its Mission and Goals.

Mission:

To change the operation and management of the ACF Basin to achieve:

1. Equitable solutions among stakeholders that balance economic, ecological, and social values.
2. Viable solutions that ensure that the entire ACF Basin is a sustainable resource for current and future generations.

Goals:

1. To develop a “consensus based” basin wide vision and a unified voice for the ACF Basin.
2. To enhance communication among stakeholders in the ACF Basin.
3. To develop and disseminate a common scientifically valid understanding of the ACF Basin, including the interrelated nature of water management in the basin, the needs of all of its stakeholders, and the limitations of the system.
4. To implement solutions that are based on the best available technology and science.
5. To pursue appropriate change to institutional structure, policies, and procedures in implementing the solutions set forth by this entity.

The selected candidate for this project will assist with the planning, facilitation, and follow-up activities for two, 2-day meetings of approximately 40-56 GB members and a number of outside observers during 2010, and additional committee meetings of smaller proportions throughout 2010. The selected candidate will be responsible for executing the following tasks:

Task 1: Meeting Preparation – The selected candidate will work closely with the ACFS Executive Committee to organize and plan the meetings. candidate shall participate in 3-4 planning team conference calls prior to the quarterly meeting to focus on development of the meeting agenda, protocols for the workshop, and any other identified needs. The candidate is responsible for producing process-related materials (i.e. agenda, etc.) required at the meeting in a coordinated manner with the various committees and executive committee for each of the quarterly meetings.

Task 2: Conflict resolution – The selected candidate must work with and between diverse interests to help the group refine issues, establish and implement a facilitated environmental conflict resolution process, and seek to reach consensus within the GB.

Task 3: Help guide the organization work towards building a common database of information and terms that ensures clarity of understanding among the ACFS Governing Board.

Task 4: Meeting Facilitation – The selected candidate will facilitate two meetings with each meeting lasting two full days to allow productive and interactive conversations among meeting participants; uphold the charter; operating procedures and ground rules; achieve meeting goals; and keep the meeting on schedule. Meetings will include process, administrative, and substantive focused discussions as defined in the Charter. Process focused discussions will include topics such as ground rules, operating procedures, decision rules, and other issues that will further develop a functional framework for the group. Administrative issues include issues associated with the running of the organization. Substantive focused discussion will include policy and scientific topics related to management of the ACF River system as it relates to sharing water resources within the basin.

Task 5: Meeting Follow-up – Candidate will work with the ACFS Executive Committee and ECR to put together a comprehensive summary of the meeting and any follow-up and next steps. Candidate will document the meeting, highlighting major themes, issues and action items from the sessions. Notes will be shared with participants for review and comment, and candidate will edit as appropriate. The candidate will participate in a meeting debriefing with the ACFS Executive Committee.

Task 6: Assist and engage with the Executive Board, Work Groups and Committees with moving forward with assignments and forward organizational progress for next quarterly meeting.

The successful candidate will contract directly with ACFS GB depending on funding and oversight requirements determined by ACFS. ACFS plans to engage a candidate based on a firm-fixed price basis for this scope of work.

TIME PERIOD

Services will be required starting on August 30, 2010 and will continue intermittently through December 2010.

ESTIMATED HOURS, AVAILABLE BUDGET, AND BILLABLE EXPENSES

It is anticipated that approximately 65-75 hours of contracted professional services for each meeting will be required to complete the proposed Scope of Work.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION AND REQUIRED SUBMITTALS

Proposals will be evaluated based on the provision of all requested information and the degree to which each individual meets the following criteria in comparison with the qualifications of other candidates submitting proposals:

SPECIFIC SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Demonstrated experience and expertise working in a neutral capacity as a conflict resolution practitioner planning and facilitating consensus building processes with large stakeholder groups with a broad range of interests. (30 percent)
2. Demonstrated knowledge and experience facilitating multi-stakeholder groups working with highly technical and complex scientific information regarding water resources related issues. (20 percent)
3. Proposed approach to facilitate the group and move the ACFS towards its desired outcomes and goals. (25 percent)
4. Capacity to provide process-related meeting materials including notes of meeting outcomes and action items. (5 percent)
5. Cost estimate (20 percent)

Provide examples of work experience that displays and identifies processes, skills, tools and traits used in facilitation, and describe the results of the facilitated process where these were applied. Please offer this with the context of at least 3 example cases with separately identifiable groups specifically within the parameters of Environmental Conflict Resolution. Each case should have contact information with references. The descriptions should be related to large groups with very diverse interests engaged in a program of resolving environmental differences.

All responding candidate firms must identify federal, state and local clients you have provided facilitation serves for in the southeast US and outline any obligations you must fulfill with these entities.

Provide background information on:

- Size and logistical capabilities of your organization.
- Number of years of experience and educational background of the principal to be assigned to this project.
- A description of your knowledge of issues, science, applicable laws and regulations related to water resources, the environment, water supply, wastewater, hydropower, recreation, historical and cultural resources, sustainability, seafood and fishery resource management, thermo electric power and other related entities.
- The roles of state and federal agencies in the management of regulated waterways for projects you have been involved.

Each respondent is asked to clearly state and identify any relationship, conflict of interests, or specific engagements with clients that may have an interest in the water resources of the ACF, or with any participant with ACFS, or any federal or state agency with an interest in the ACF.

Responding candidates are asked to present a draft conceptual scope of work outlining their approach to working with the ACFS and facilitating its meetings. This must include a statement of fees and an approach to costing out the services for the proposed services. Note-The requirements in this RFP are the minimum, if the candidate feels additional items are needed to complete the intent of the RFP, then the candidate should discuss this in their proposal.

The submission package should total **no more than eight (8) pages**. Brevity and succinctness are appreciated. Please do not submit any additional supplemental materials. All information submitted should be considered non-confidential, including cost information.

Candidates should also include the following information in their submissions:

- 1) A statement of qualifications, including education and experience of the principal to be assigned to the project.
- 2) The contact information for the principal of the organization assigned to this project. A principle of the firm that has the authority to bind the firm in an agreement shall also sign the proposal.
- 3) A description of unique skills or values that the candidate brings to the ACFS.
- 4) Statement of availability to work on this project between May 2010 and December 2010. The statement must outline any other limiting factor that would be relevant to ACFS in the selection process.
- 5) Costs as shown in Attachment A

The ACFS reserves the right to:

- reject any or all proposals;
- waive any formalities in the process of receiving, reviewing or selecting candidates for the work;
- Engage in a contract for services with the firm or entity that the ACFS deems most appropriate for the work ACFS desires to have completed.

ACFS makes clear that it reserves the right to terminate this solicitation process at any time to seek other sources, avenues or methods for professional facilitation services.

A conference call will be held on June 15, 2010 at 10: AM Eastern. The call in number is 1 218 339 4600 Code 488717#. Said call will be held for respondents to hear historical information on ACFS, to clarify any interim information about ACFS relative to this process, and to address questions as may be raised by respondents to this solicitation. The Work group will not answer questions outside this event, but may offer clarifications or amplifications to this process as the Work group deems necessary.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

All proposals must be submitted no later than **5:00 PM (EDT) on June 30, 2010**. Proposals must be submitted in hard copy, in an envelope clearly marked on the outside “PROPOSAL RESPONSE-FACILITATION SERVICES”. All written proposals must be accompanied by a CD ROM disk with a readable PDF digital copy of the entire proposal package for dissemination via email to ACFS Facilitation Work Group members.

Proposals must be addressed to and will be received at:

By Mail:

ACF Stakeholders

P.O. Box 1612

Albany, GA 31702

PROCESS FOR SELECTING CANDIDATE

The ACFS Facilitator Work Group will evaluate all proposals and report the results of this process to the Governing Board. The Facilitation Work Group may call on other qualified parties to assist with the review and selection process. The ACFS Facilitation Working Group may contact the candidates for interviews if deemed necessary and will contact the selected Candidate once a final decision has been made.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely:

ACFS Facilitation Work Group

Attachment A
Proposed Project Budget

| <u>1. Direct Labor</u> | <u>Estimated Hours</u> | <u>Rate/Hour</u> | <u>Total Est. Cost</u> |
|--|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| (List by position all professional personnel participating in project) | | | |
| Total Direct Labor | | | \$ _____ |
| 1. <u>Overhead Cost</u> (Overhead percentage rate) X (Total Direct Labor) | | | |
| Total Overhead | | | \$ _____ |
| 2. <u>Other Direct Costs</u> (List other items and basis for computing cost for each. Examples include computer services, equipment, etc.) | | | |
| Total Other Direct Costs | | | \$ _____ |
| 3. <u>Subcontracts</u> (For each, list identity, purpose and rate) | | | |
| Total Subcontracts | | | \$ _____ |
| 4. <u>Travel</u> | | | |
| a. Travel by common carrier. (List number of trips and economy class airfare, plus taxi and shuttle fares, etc.) | | | |
| b. Travel by private automobile within ARC area. (List # of days x rate) | | | |
| Total Travel | | | \$ _____ |
| 5. <u>Profit</u> (Percentage rate X basis) | | | |
| Total Profit | | | \$ _____ |
| Total Estimated Cost and Profit | | | \$ _____ |