

**Notice of Intent to
Request Qualifications and Pre-Proposals for the Project
Envisioning a Chicago Waterway System for the 21st Century**

Issued by the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
September 8, 2010

Overview

This notice is being sent to you because your firm may have the technical qualifications to support the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI) in their efforts to develop and evaluate options for separating the Mississippi River and Great Lakes watersheds to prevent the transfer of aquatic invasive species, with a focus on the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). Your firm will also receive the formal request for pre-proposals without any further actions by you.

The concept of hydrologically separating the two watersheds is referred to as “ecological separation.” Such a separation must also maintain, if not improve, other aspects of the system, including the movement of goods and people; water quality; and flood control. The purpose of the project will be to provide a detailed evaluation of potential options for ecological separation, including their costs, benefits and impacts. It will advance three strategic objectives:

- Evaluate the economic, technical, and ecological feasibility of eco-separation by illustrating no fewer than three options to achieve it, along with associated costs, impacts and potential benefits of a re-engineered hydrologic system for greater Chicago;
- Improve transportation, water quality, and flood control in and around the system; and
- Support and complement the work of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Inter-Basin Study by defining, assessing and vetting scenarios for ecological separation.

In a separate request, the GLC and GLSLCI will be requesting qualifications and pre-proposals from qualified teams that can provide a highly experienced project manager and a team of multi-disciplinary expert consultants to meet these objectives. Both the Request for Qualifications and Pre-Proposals (RFQ/PP) and the subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP) will have substantial detail to aid the potential consultant in responding to the direction of the GLC and GLSLCI, yet allowing sufficient flexibility to encourage innovative approaches. The RFQ/PP is currently being developed and will be transmitted to potentially qualified firms in mid September 2010, with submittals due by October 22. A short list of qualified firms will be notified in mid November and asked to respond to a complete RFP by submitting technical proposals by early December 2010. Entities receiving this notice of intent and the subsequent RFQ/PP are encouraged to share these materials with other potentially qualified entities.

Additional Information

The GLC has posted a large amount of background information on their website at <http://www.glc.org/ans/cwsphaseII>. In an effort to transmit additional information rapidly, a project blog has been established at <http://wiki.glin.net/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=19202235>. Firms interested in receiving a copy of the RFQ/PP can make the request on the blog or contact Matt Doss at the Great Lakes Commission (mdoss@glc.org). We ask that a single point of contact be identified for each firm showing interest. Questions and comments concerning the project and the role of the project manager can also be submitted through the blog.

Project Funding

Funding for this project has been received from four sources to date: the Joyce Foundation, the Mott Foundation, the Frey Foundation, and the Great Lakes Protection Fund. Other funders are being sought for additional aspects of this project. Information about the amount of available funding will be provided to all consultants invited to respond to the full RFP.

Schedule

The tentative schedule for the project is as follows:

- Sept. 17, 2010: Release RFQ/PP (to be distributed to list of potentially qualified entities)
- Sept. 17- Oct. 15: RFQ/PP question and answer period (questions to be submitted, and responses provided, via online “blog”)
- Oct. 22, 2010: RFQ/PP submittals due
- Oct. 25-Nov. 5: Internal review of candidates
- By Nov. 12: Notify 3-5 finalists and issue to them a RFP requesting full proposals, study plans and budgets
- Dec. 3, 2010: Final proposals due
- Week of Dec. 6: Interview finalists (if necessary)
- Dec. 15, 2010: Make selection and notify applicant
- Dec. 15-Jan. 14, 2011 Negotiate contract
- Jan 14, 2011: Sign contract and project manager starts work
- January 2012: Project ends

Responses to the RFQ/PP must propose a project manager and a team of specialists capable of addressing the complex hydrological, hydraulic, environmental, commercial, socioeconomic and related issues promptly. The project manager and team will present information at meetings conducted by the GLC, GLSLCI, and the project’s Executive Committee. The GLC and GLSLCI anticipate—and encourage—that prime consultants will form teams to address the technical requirements. However, use of sole-source sub-consultants is discouraged, and the GLC and GLSLCI reserve the right to approve the selection of sub-consultants, including those that may not have been part of their original team.

Work products will include a comprehensive report and a series of supporting technical sub-documents. A key component of the report will be detailed cost estimates for implementation of proposed alternatives. The consultant will assist the GLC and GLSLCI in facilitating an extensive stakeholder engagement process to ensure participation from key interests from throughout the Great Lakes region, but with a special emphasis on the Chicago area.