

Questions & Answers

Functioning Floodplain Assessment, Mapping, Valuation, and Tracking to Support Floodplain Restoration and Protection in the Lake Champlain Basin

Release Date: July 31, 2019

Proposals Due: September 25, 2019 at 4:00 pm

1. Will proposals that map out a scope of work that requires three years be considered, if the total cost of work falls within the estimated dollar value of the grant, or must the entire scope of work proposed be completed in calendar years 2020 and 2021? Because the Phase 1 effort is not due to be completed until 2020, our response to the Request for Information submitted in June mapped out a three year term to give the team time to see those Phase 1 results to completion.

- A. It is likely that the term of the contract can be extended through mid-2022, depending on the timing of sub-deliverables. By early to mid-2022, DEC needs to begin using certain contract deliverables to help identify strategic interventions and begin a couple demonstration projects, as required in its grant agreement with EPA, which ends September 30, 2022.

The DEC believes there should be considerable overlap between Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Functioning Floodplains Initiative. By the time the Phase 2 contract begins (early 2020), the Phase 1 contractors will have completed a pilot watershed for mapping connectivity and should be ready to join with Phase 2 contractors in creating methods to augment the connectivity analysis with stream and flood-related processes (i.e., flow storage, and sediment transport and deposition) information. Methods for evaluating floodplain function and ecosystem services can also begin well before the Phase 1 contract starts to wrap up with its public outreach sub-phase.

Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 workplans include considerable portions of time at their respective ends for creating tracking and outreach tools and materials, this leaves room for both technical hand-offs to occur before projects end, from Phase 1 to Phase 2 science (early to mid-2020) and from Phase 2 practice ID to DEC demonstration projects (in early to mid-2022).

2. **Will individual proposals that commit to delivering parts but not the entire set of products enumerated on page 2 of the RFP be considered?** Our team, in our response submitted in June,

signaled that we may want to submit more than one proposal to achieve the goals of the FFI-Phase 2, leveraging both the work of academics at UVM and consulting teams with appropriate expertise. The RFP does not make clear whether the state envisions the possibility of more than one award that would collectively deliver the requested products laid out in the RFP.

- A.** Not mentioning the possibility of multiple but complementary proposals, and subsequent awards, was an oversight. The DEC would be open to more than one award if confident that separate teams of consultants were prepared to work closely, avoid duplication and inefficiency, and deliver a complete set of deliverables.

- 3.** For stakeholder involvement under RFP Task 5, are additional resources (e.g., stipends, mileage reimbursement) available to enable these stakeholder groups (e.g., watershed groups, conservation districts) to participate in development of the training modules and user manual for the web-based tracking tools? Or should the response to this RFP include resources for these groups?
 - A.** At this time, the DEC has not identified additional resources to increase the ability of stakeholder groups to participate in the development of training modules or the user manual. The DEC will not penalize a proposal that fails to include robust support, but may be deferential to a proposal that attempts to support stakeholder participation without significantly compromising the other Task deliverables. DEC's Phase 2 project places a priority on deliverables related to technical mapping, assessment and tracking, and while the first drafts of training modules, user manuals, and outreach materials are very important, they will undoubtedly need to evolve intensely just as Phase 2 is ending. The DEC will decide mid-way through the Phase 2 project whether to use it's own resources to support the further evolution of outreach materials , or, more likely, seek the resources for a third Phase of the project, including further stakeholder and public participation.

- 4.** Also under RFP Task 5, can the VTDEC please clarify - are training events to be carried out under this Phase 2 scope of work? Or are stakeholders simply to be engaged in the development of the training modules and user manual that would be used for training events implemented under a separate scope of work?
 - A.** The DEC does not anticipate the Phase 2 scope of work will go beyond stakeholder engagement in the development of the training modules and user manual (Task 5) and a trial outreach effort to gage the receptivity of the broader public for the messaging that is drafted in Task 6.

5. Under RFP Task 6, does VTDEC envision this outreach to take place near the end of Phase 2 to evaluate public perceptions in the context of products of earlier tasks? Or should this outreach be conducted earlier in Phase 2 to inform method development for earlier tasks?
 - A. The DEC anticipates that the scope of work will include the involvement of a stakeholder group, established by the DEC, where the contractor would provide presentations on the progress of the overall Functioning Floodplain Initiative at specific milestones. This stakeholder group will include representatives of both government and non-government groups who we would want to ultimately use or receive the functioning floodplain information. This stakeholder committee is not the same as the actual outreach that might begin at the end of Phase 2 to evaluate broader public perceptions.
6. Will this RFP require the development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)?
 - A. For projects funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), any collection, production, or use of environmental data requires the development of a QAPP. This EPA-funded project will utilize existing data, and data being collected under other research projects, for Phase 1 of the Vermont Functioning Floodplain Initiative (“VFF Initiative”), Stream and Floodplain Connectivity Mapping and Modeling and therefore, will require a QAPP for Secondary Data (see guidance at the following link: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/EPANESecondaryDataGuidance.pdf>).