RFP # 500-08-503 Pre-Bid Questions/Answers

General:

1. Please clarify what time the proposals are due.

   The proposals from each stage are due to our contracts office no later than 3 PM Pacific Time.

2. Could you release abstracts or project descriptions from last year's TIBC awarded proposals so we are not duplicating efforts but rather building on existing ones?

   You may request that information from Rachel Grant in our contracts office. The best way to contact her would be via email at rgrant@energy.state.ca.us. Current research being pursued by PIER & the PIER Buildings program can also be accessed at the following link:

   www.energy.ca.gov/research/buildings/tibc/index.html

3. Is TIBC II a follow up to last year's TIBC RFP?

   Yes.

4. The language in the RFP specifically describes supporting development of the 2011 building codes & standards initiative. As mentioned earlier in this presentation, it's too late to address the 2011 codes and standards development process so will this language in the RFP be changed to reflect the support for the 2013-2014 building codes and standards?

   Yes, we will address this in writing and release an addendum with new language in the RFP that offers support to the development and future revisions of the codes and standards beyond 2011.

5. What is the energy simulation software recommended/approved by the Energy Commission?

   There is no particular energy simulation software that is recommended/approved by the Energy Commission.

6. Do all the technical projects within a proposal need a common thread?

   Yes. These are integrated research proposals. The overall program (proposal) needs to address an overall programmatic goal with each project supporting those goals.

7. Can we have a copy of the presentation?

   Yes. The pre-bid conference presentation will be posted along with addendum #2.

8. Please define entities for whom Customer References must be provided.

   Bidders must submit 4 Customer references in response to this solicitation. Bidders who do not submit 4 Customer references may be rejected in the Completeness Screening.

9. If there is a delay in posting the Stage 1 results, will the Commission adjust the due date for the Stage 2 proposals accordingly so that a six week preparation period is maintained?

   It is possible we could extend the due date for stage 2 proposals if the posting of the stage 1 results is delayed, but we do not anticipate this at the current time.

10. Program Coordination and Market Connection Evaluation: The header for the scoring criteria listed on pages 20 and 21 references program coordination and market connection, the text below discusses only the market connections project, the table header references only the market connection projects, and the criteria in the table discusses program coordination team, market connection project teams, and program budget. It infers that the program coordination team and the program budget evaluation only applies to the market connection projects. Is it possible to differentiate the program coordination team and budget evaluation from the market connection project evaluation?

    The section heading on page 20 is referring to the scoring criteria on pages 20-23 which contains the scoring criteria for both the Market Connection Projects and the Overall Program. For clarity, the RFP document will be modified. In stage 1, proposals will be scored in the following order:

    First, Research Projects will be scored; Second, Market Connections Projects will be scored; and finally all proposals containing 2 or more passing projects (Research and/or Market Connections) will be scored for their Overall Program.

<u>Two Stage Proposal:</u>

11. If you have 5 projects in a proposal, projects 1 and 2 pass, but projects 3-5 don't, would stage 2 proposals still have to include all 5 projects?

    No. We will tell you which projects pass/fail from stage 1. Only and all passing projects from stage 1 are to be included in your stage 2 proposals.

<u>Possible Bidders</u>

12. Does it make sense for MIT, an out-of-state academic institution to apply for PIER grants?

    This solicitation is for a contract and not a grant. It does make sense for out-of-state academic institutions to submit for PIER contracts. The PIER program has contracted with entities not only out-of-state but out of the country as well. Please understand, however, that all proposals must contain work that directly benefits California.

13. Are programs and projects located outside of California investor owned utility service areas eligible?

    Yes.

14. Can an organization compose more than 1 program i.e. submit multiple proposals?

    One person cannot submit multiple proposals, but an entity using different individuals as leads can submit multiple proposals. Please refer to RFP Section I, page 6, "Who can bid on this RFP?"

15. Are there restrictions for submitting proposals at the project-level?

    The only restriction for submitting at the project-level is that if an entity has the same project in multiple proposals then all those projects will be failed and eliminated from all proposals. An entity submitting multiple projects in different proposals must submit projects different in nature. Please refer to RFP Section I, page 6, "Who can bid on this RFP?"

16. If two people from two different organizations are partnering on a project, can one of them submit a project as part of one proposal and the other submit the same project as part of another proposal?

Yes, because they are at two different organizations. The restriction stated in the RFP is that "An organization cannot submit the same research Project in multiple proposals." Please refer to RFP Section I, page 6, "Who can bid on this RFP?"

Terms and Conditions

17. What happens to intellectual property if it is developed using PIER money?

Different terms and conditions apply to the various entities regarding intellectual property that is developed using PIER funds. It would be best to refer to the terms and conditions at the following link to get the specific terms and conditions for your entity type.

www.energy.ca.gov/research/contractors.html

Match

18. For stage 1 match & in-kind funding, how solid must these funds be in the first round of budgetary submittals? What if match funds change from stage 1 to stage 2?

Although the RFP does not specify how firm match funding must be, it is in the best interest of bidders to make sure it is firm. Stage 1 at the project and proposal level includes "the written commitment of matching funds" as part of scoring. In addition to a higher score, having firm match prevents potentially losing a contract award. If a proposal is selected for funding and then match funds are lost, the contract might end.

We recognize that changes can occur in match funds between stage 1 and stage 2 for a variety of reasons. For example, if match funds are associated with a project and the project is eliminated in stage 1, the match amount will be reduced. Bidders can alter the match amount between stages in order to adjust for this or for any other reason.

19. Would in-kind cost share be acceptable? Or do you require hard dollar cost share?

In-kind cost share is acceptable, but hard dollar cost share is preferred. The type of cost share is taken into consideration during the technical scoring process.

20. If we're working with non-profit organizations, how would this be captured in respect to match funds?

You could put a value on the amount of time the non-profit organization is providing or equipment they're supplying.

21. Regarding matching funds -- on page 17, it is noted that the match funds should be "proportional to the ratio of private benefits compared to public benefits of the proposal." Please advise how you expect the benefits, and the ratio, to be calculated.

We purposefully do not provide a specific calculation because of the wide range of possible projects and resulting benefits. In general, some proposals have more private benefits (e.g., seeking profits from a technology to be developed with PIER funds), while other proposals seek more or strictly public benefits. We expect more match funding from proposals that have higher private benefits.

Budget

22. Is there a cap on the percentage of profit a bidder may include in the proposal's budget? If so, what is that cap?

The cap for profit on all PIER contracts is 10%.

23. What are the allowable overhead rates? Are these specified?

We don't identify any acceptable or un-acceptable overhead rates. However, if an overhead rate appears high, we reserve the right to question the Bidder and request additional proof that the Bidder normally charges the same rate in its other contracts. The Energy Commission will not pay artificially inflated overhead or other rates.

In addition, budgets are scored on the appropriateness of your direct costs versus indirect costs. Your proposal will be considered more competitive if your direct costs are a higher percentage than indirect costs.

24. Has the Energy Commission published guidelines and/or rules on how to do the calculations of indirect costs?

The budget spreadsheet itself states allowable indirect costs. We recommend using your standard accounting procedures in these calculations.

25. How should program coordination effort by the program lead and individual project teams be handled in the scope and budget? Should bidders show all coordination effort and scope in Project 1 (Administration) and thus include all necessary project team members' related activities and costs in Project 1 or (2) provide for project team effort and costs related to program coordination in the individual project budgets and scopes?

It is recommended that, when possible, all administrative activities take place and be budgeted for in the Administration Project and Tasks. Duplicating the administration activities in each project defeats the purpose of having an Administrative project. This may be something to address in later versions of this solicitation but not at this time.

Attachments

26. If a TIBC II submittal contains projects identical to the 2008 TIBC submittal, would it be sufficient to just include the 2008 letters of support for those projects?

We recommend updated letters of support.

27. Please clarify what a California Based Entity is.

Please refer to attachment 9 in the RFP document.

28. With regard to Attachment 13 - the Stage-1 Budget template, a number of malfunctions were detected in our initial use, and specifically malfunctions preventing some column entries from appearing in the total rows and those totals failing to forward to other tables. Does the Commission intend to reissue this attachment to address these malfunctions and if so, when?

The Energy Commission cannot duplicate these malfunctions. For further assistance in this matter, please contact Rachel Grant at rgrant@energy.state.ca.us and she will help troubleshoot these problems on a case-by-case basis.

29. Although we realize that project scope-of-work documents are part of the Stage-2 submission, is it permissible to include them as an optional item in the project descriptions in Stage-1 as well, given that there is no longer a page-limit on these descriptions? To do so would provide bidders exercising this option a convenient framework for expanding on their project descriptions.

Attachment 11, Project Description already contains an outline or template for how the scoring committee would like to see these documents. Please follow the outline or template document.

Preference Points

30. Explain what the preferences are for California-Based Entities (CBE).

Please refer to attachment 9 of the RFP document which explains these non-technical preference points thoroughly.

31. Are additional points from DVBE, CBE, etc added after a program has already received a passing score of 750?

Yes. Preference points are only added to stage 2 proposals that receive at least a 750 technical score.

32. If a program managing entity is a California-based entity and partners with an out-of-state subcontractor, would this make this proposal eligible for the CBE preference points?

It depends on the total percentage of PIER funds going to the CBE (at least 50% needed to qualify). Please refer to Attachment 9 of the RFP.

33. Due to the fact that projects can be eliminated from stage 1 to stage 2, could it be possible to meet the CBE preference requirement for stage 1, but not in stage 2?

Yes, it is possible to qualify for the CBE non-technical preference points in your stage 1 proposals, however you may not qualify for these points if you have key California-based entities in projects that fail stage 1 going into stage 2. For this reason, CBE non-technical preference points are only added to proposals meeting the minimum technical score (750) and CBE requirements in your stage 2 proposals.

Target Areas

34. Can we span more than one topic within a proposal?

    Given the nature of buildings, it's implicit and understood that the various research topics in attachment 20 can be integrated. The purpose of this solicitation is to fund integrated research programs, so covering various research topics in a proposal is acceptable. However, integration amongst all your projects must be evident in your proposals.

35. Can you explain the cycle of research topics over the coming years?

    The research topics included in attachment 20 change based on the current needs of the PIER research portfolio. It is hard to say what the focus will be for the 'coming years'; it will obviously depend on the research awarded through this year's solicitation.

36. Is zero net energy modeling for a master plan development an eligible project?

    This could be an eligible project under topic # 5.

37. With respect to topic 6, Renewable Energy Secure Buildings, are projects in this area only going to be able to exhaust the PIER funding that have been allocated from the PIER Renewables program area exclusively? Should we be concerned about this?

    Bidders should not be concerned with the allocation of PIER funds from the various programs in PIER. All proposals that pass the screenings will be scored and placed in a ranked order. We will go down the ranked order list until all PIER funds for this solicitation are exhausted. It would be impossible to allocate the PIER Renewables program funding solely to projects that deal with only topic 6 due to the integrated nature of all the research topics in this solicitation.

38. With respect to topic 5, Community Scale Systems Integration, there is a reference to use the PLACE3S model if proposing design and analysis tools. Is the purpose of this to energize the PLACE3S model?

    The purpose of referencing this model in this solicitation is to make sure that bidders include adequate reference to the PLACE3S tool if the proposal includes the development or use of a community design tool. The Commission is not requesting that bidders use PLACE3S in place of other tools, but the Commission does need to know why PLACE3S or another tool is the best tool for the proposed application. If you feel the PLACE3S model is not the best tool in the market place then state this in your proposals, with adequate explanations. Whether you support this model or not, it must be addressed in your proposal if you are proposing the development or use of a community scale design tool.

39. It does not seem apparent that topic 4 supports HVAC systems research such as HVAC systems interactive effects &/or HVAC systems interacting with building envelopes, would this be acceptable?

    Yes, topic 4 welcomes research in this area.

40. Are we going to drop 2011 building standards development altogether?

    No. We are altering the language in the RFP to support 2011 and beyond.

41. What is PLACE3S?

    Please refer to the following link for reference:

www.energy.ca.gov/places/

42. Would access to PLACE3s be provided by the Energy Commission to users free-of-charge or will it require a separate subcontract / license with EcoInteractive©?

    The use of PLACE3s does require a separate license/subcontract with EcoInteractive. PLACE3s is not in the public domain.

43. If a separate subcontract with EcoInteractive© is necessary are there any guidelines on the approximate costs associated with the use of the PLACE3s tool and a ***range*** or average of costs for that vendor's use of the tool examine alternative development scenarios for a large-scale development site?

    For the costs associated with using PLACE3s, please visit www.EcoInteractive.com

44. Will there be access to the databases of older California vintage buildings developed in PLACE3s *outside* of a contract with EcoInteractive© and if so, at what cost?

    No. Access to the database of projects developed with the PLACE3s tool requires a contract with EcoInteractive©. Please contact EcoInteractive© for the specific costs associated with this.

    With regard to the passage "...data show many problems with water use...especially...hot water use." Can you indicate which specific problems you are referring to?

    It is referring to energy wastage due to poor hot water distribution systems.

45. The Community-scale systems integration description indicates the Commission's interest in determining the environmental impacts for community-scale systems development. Are bidders to assume this interest includes both local impacts (i.e., air, water and solid waste) and global environmental impacts (i.e., ghg emissions)?

    Yes, both local and global (AB32) impacts

46. Would solar cooling technology design and performance modeling, as distinct from actual technology demonstration, be considered one of the appropriate activities to address the Renewable Energy Secure Buildings (RESB) target area?

    Yes. When the project includes other activities such as design and demonstration and the design and modeling is related to the other activities.

47. Does a combustion technology running on renewable fuel (biogas or bio-diesel) qualify for inclusion with RESB? What about CHP prime movers running on natural gas?

    Combustion technologies running on renewable energy would qualify, however, prime movers running on natural gas would not.

48. With regard to Codes and Standards Support, Information Resources and Market Connections, could a professional or trade association conference or a public workshop, be utilized as a means for disseminating PIER research project findings?

    Absolutely.

49. Given that first cost financing and the split incentive dilemma are perceived as major barriers to market adoption of net-zero energy developments by the development industry, would the generation of financial innovations to overcome these market barriers be deemed an eligible activity under this RFP. Specifically, a feasible financial road-map to fund large-scale energy-efficient community development projects. If so, could it be included as a major task under a community systems integration project?

Yes, developing innovative financing mechanisms for renewable energy would be an eligible activity. The financial model would have to be validated through adoption and implementation.