

# **WATER ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

## **Request for Proposals (RFP)**

*Proposals must be received by 5:00 PM EST, Feb. 11, 2009*

## **NDWRCDP Website Update**

### **RFP No. DEC7R06**

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### **Background**

The Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) is seeking a contractor to upgrade the website for the National Decentralized Water Resources Capacity Development Project (NDWRCDP): [www.ndwrmdp.org](http://www.ndwrmdp.org). The NDWRCDP is a cooperative research effort on decentralized wastewater (e.g. septic tanks) and stormwater systems. The project is funded by a grant from U.S. EPA which is currently being administered and managed by WERF.

The NDWRCDP website has been in existence for about ten years and is in need of an update of its appearance and functionality. Further, many web and technology advancements have come about in the last several years that could help improve the searchability and user-friendliness of the site. That site is intended to serve as a central location for dissemination of news, information, final reports and products from the NDWRCDP research program. Thus it is critical to have a site that is easy to find, access, and use which can serve as a valuable resource to assist the decentralized water quality community in their work.

### **Objectives**

For the website [www.ndwrmdp.org](http://www.ndwrmdp.org), the selected contractor will:

- Redesign the site
- Improve organization and navigation of reports, papers, and other content on the site
- Enhance the external visibility and searchability of the site and its contents
- Incorporate new content, in cooperation with WERF staff

### **Key Tasks**

The contractor will work with WERF staff and volunteers to develop basic ideas into mockup web pages that will be submitted to WERF for approval before final posting. WERF staff and volunteers will be involved in the review, testing and approval process. Items of critical interest to WERF include the following:

#### Redesign the site

The entire site should be redesigned so that the appearance is more up to date and consistent with the WERF website and other websites of this nature (small websites run by non-profits). Ideas to consider are changing the text font and color; creating a new NDWRCDP logo; adding images and the logos of the NDWRCDP cooperative partners and links to their sites; adding links to

other relevant sites and resources; possibly refreshing every time a user comes to the homepage. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance should be explored.

Additional technical programming and software enhancements to improve site function may include:

- animation and audio capability;
- cascading style sheets (CSS) capability;
- really simple syndication (RSS) feed capability;

(The site should be maintained in the Microsoft .NET platform.)

The redesigned site should be more user friendly than the current site and provide an improved user experience.

#### Improve organization and navigability

The contractor should reorganize the site content to make it easier for users to locate items of interest. For example, allow users to view final reports and other documents by date of publication (as they currently are), by the four topical areas identified on the current site, by keywords, and by other additional means. The contractor should develop options for improved navigability and test the navigation options with WERF staff and volunteers.

A standard format for displaying key information about research projects and their associated products should be developed. Existing project information, such as project cost, end date, number, contractor, executive summary, etc., as well as new information (to be developed by or with the assistance of WERF staff) such as short project or report descriptions may be incorporated into the standard display format to support the reorganization and improved ease of use.

The contractor should also provide an internal search engine and a site map for users.

#### Enhance visibility and searchability

Searchability and ranking for the NDWRCDP site and its content using Google and other search engines could be greatly improved, particularly for the posted documents (PDFs and other file types). Methods to improve the ranking of the website and of posted documents should be explored. In responding to this RFP, the proposer should present their recommendations on search engine optimization, best practices/techniques, tagging, favicon (favorite icon) capability, etc.

WERF staff and volunteers should be queried to get web links to others active in the decentralized systems arena, and this information should be added along with the NDWRCDP publications.

A system for tracking and monitoring downloads of research products and reports should be developed to provide feedback on site use and activity (i.e. provide web analytics guidance/capabilities).

The contractor should help determine and establish a new, more easily remembered domain name for the site than www.ndwrcdp.org. The existing domain name will remain intact, but will forward to the new domain name.

The capability for users to sign up to receive e-mail alerts and newsletters should be developed and added to the site. Blogging capabilities should also be added.

#### Incorporate new content

WERF staff, volunteers, NDWRCDP partners, and other sources of information should be mined for items for the news and events page. Initially the contractor will collect this information and present it for review and posting to the site. After the contractor completes the site update, future news and events information will be collected and posted by WERF staff to keep the site current.

Some snippets and catchy sound bites for helping to market information available on the site may need to be developed to help draw attention to research results and findings on the site and to encourage people to open up the products and reports. Some marketing information may need to be jointly developed with WERF staff.

#### Other

The possibility of moving the NDWRCDP site from its current server to the server that hosts the WERF website will be explored, and potentially executed, as part of this contract.

#### **Budget and timeframe**

Proposers must indicate the budget needed to complete the work and whether there are in-kind contributions to the project. A maximum budget of \$30,000 is available for this effort. The timeframe is 6 months or less.

#### **Contractor selection**

Selection of proposals is a competitive process. WERF staff members from the Research and Communications departments will select a contractor with the assistance of volunteers established to advise this project. Criteria for contractor selection include:

- qualifications of proposer(s) including knowledge, prior work and experience, and demonstrated ability in programming as well as design (if a lead proposer only has programming capability, they may partner with a design firm(s), or vice versa),
- project approach, technical merit, and responsiveness to RFP,
- ability to complete the project within the time period,
- reasonable and competitive budget for the work that will be accomplished.

WERF reserves the right to contact proposers for a follow-up interview(s).

#### **Instructions for submitting proposals**

Please see instructions for submitting a proposal. All proposals are due in WERF's offices by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Feb. 11, 2009. The body of the proposal should be no-more than 5-pages in length. Proposals received after the due date will be returned to the sender.