



Northeast Regional Ocean Council

Request for Proposals:

Branding, Website, and Web Communications Strategy for the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC)

RFP Issued: April 23, 2012

Proposals Due: May 23, 2012

Northeast Regional Ocean Council Request for Proposals: Branding, Website, and Web Communications Strategy for the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC)

Part 1: Scope of Work

- 1. Statement of Purpose:** The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) is seeking proposals for contractor assistance to finalize a web communications strategy, develop a new website, redesign a logo, develop key messages about NROC and focus areas, and create online options to collect stakeholder feedback/comments.
- 2. Background:** NROC, established by New England's Governors in 2005, is a state-federal partnership to implement solutions to New England's most pressing ocean and coastal issues that require a regional response. NROC member states include Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont. Federal agencies, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Interior (U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, have been full members of NROC since its inception.
- 3. Objective:** This Request for Proposals (RFP) will directly support NROC's web communications needs.

Proposals should include a clear description of strategies to meet the following goals:

- Refine and better understand key stakeholders and their communication needs (e.g. interests in NROC, key messages, and communication product types);
- Provide stakeholders with a clear understanding of NROC's purpose, regional priorities, and opportunities for engagement;
- Increase accessibility NROC information; Provide members, partners and stakeholders with access to key NROC documents, contact information, meeting details, regional priority issue information, calendar of events, announcements, and map of region;
- Provide stakeholders and partners with online options for contacting NROC and providing feedback or input;

Further information on the tasks intended to meet this objective is provided below.

Task 1. Review NROC's Web Communications Strategy. For this task, the successful respondent will:

- Review and refine NROC’s web communications strategy in order to better understand key stakeholders and their communication needs (e.g. interests in NROC, key messages, and communication product types);
- Guide development of key messages and web design

Task 2. Branding. For this task, the successful respondent will:

- Create key messages that provide NROC partners and broader stakeholders with a clear understanding of NROC’s purpose, regional priorities, and opportunities for engagement. Note: As part of this task, NROC is specifically looking for up to 10 key taglines that promote understanding of its purpose, membership, priorities and opportunities for stakeholder engagement;
- Create a logo that better represents NROC. The logo should be accessible in several formats (e.g. jpg, gif, etc.) for use in NROC documents and on partner websites;

Task 3. Website Re-design. For this task, the successful respondent will increase:

- Increase accessibility of NROC information;
- Provide members, partners and stakeholders with access to key NROC documents, contact information, meeting details, regional priority issue information, calendar of events, announcements, and map of region;
- Emphasis on a robust ocean planning page is necessary to meet communication goals associated with the regional ocean planning initiative;
- Provide a connection to NROC’s project management website (Basecamp) to make collaboration among NROC members more convenient;
- Revise and edit existing web content to meet needs of new web design and stakeholder engagement goals. NROC will generate new content as needed and provide to contractor for editing to meet web design needs;
- Select and edit appropriate and effective photographs from NROC collection and stock photography;
- Provide NROC with a website with key features (e.g. calendar, announcements, and document library) that can be updated/maintained by the NROC Coordinator;
- Provide NROC with options for independently creating new pages to allow for expansion
- Provide NROC Coordinator with training to update calendar, announcements, and other key web content;
- Use the url www.northeastoceancouncil.org;
- Setup cost-effective hosting service for period of 2-years;

Task 4. Stakeholder Feedback. For this task, the successful respondent will

- Provide stakeholders and partners with online options for contacting NROC and providing feedback or input;

4. **Project Funding.** The maximum budget for this project is \$25,000.

5. **Deliverables:** Proposals should include discussion of how the proposed approaches will successfully complete the following deliverables:

- Final web communications strategy

- New logo in multiple formats
 - Key branding messages for NROC
 - Draft and final website including stakeholder feedback options
6. **Project schedule:** NROC expects that work on this project will start immediately following completion of a contract, with work completed by September 29, 2012. Respondents should propose and justify a schedule that they feel is appropriate.

Part 2: Proposal Preparation and Submittal

The following sections describe the procedures and content for submitting proposals.

1. **Pre-submittal conference call.** NROC will host a pre-submission conference call to allow potential respondents to ask clarifying questions on Thursday, May 10, 2012. Instructions to participate in this conference call will be sent to all people who express their interest via email at least 24 hours before the conference call.
2. **RFP clarification.** Questions and requests for clarifications regarding this solicitation should be sent to the email contact below. The deadline for submitting such an email is 5:00 pm Monday, May 14, 2012. Responses will be posted to the NROC web-site on May 15, 2012. Questions should be sent to:

Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org

NROC Coordinator

Northeast Regional Ocean Council

3. **Submittal requirements.** For review purposes, NROC requires responses to this RFP to be delivered electronically, via email as an Adobe™ .pdf file, to Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org. Proposals must be received by email no later than 5:00 pm on Wednesday, May 23, 2012, and shall plainly identify the subject of the proposal and the name, phone, email, and address of the bidder.

It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that NROC receives the proposals prior to the specified closing date. Proposals received after the specified closing date will not be considered.

4. **Content requirements.** Proposals must be clear, succinct and shall not exceed 10 pages. Section dividers, cover letter, title page, and table of contents do not count in the overall page count of the proposal. Exclusions to the page limitation may include relevant work samples and/or resumes, as described below, provided in appendices. Each bidder is required to describe how they will provide the deliverables described above as part of their proposal. Information provided will be evaluated and scored by NROC and, missing elements will adversely impact a proposal's overall score.

a. *General requirements:*

- i. Single-spaced pages when printed on 8.5" x 11" paper with 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left and right) with font not smaller than 11 point.
- ii. The total number of pages must not exceed 10 pages (not including appendices).
- iii. The proposal must be submitted as an Adobe™ .pdf document with all pages numbered and clearly identifying the name of the bidder.

b. *Proposal organization and content:*

- i. Cover letter. Provide a cover letter indicating your organization's commitment to implementing this initiative (e.g., senior management approval, etc.). Also, include appropriate point of contact information, including the person's name, title, address, phone number and email address.
- ii. Table of contents. Identify page numbers of main sections, including any appendices.
- iii. Executive summary. Summarize the proposal's approach to completing the deliverables required by this RFP and highlight any competitive advantages or unique approaches of your proposal, cost-effectiveness measures, and particular skills offered by the project team.
- iv. Implementation plan. Include a concise, yet detailed implementation plan for completing the deliverables described in this RFP and to ensure appropriate management of the scope, schedule, budget and overall quality of work. Include a time line showing implementation, starting from contract execution, including all major tasks and their sequence, inter-relationships and dependencies between tasks and key milestones and deliverables.
- v. Detailed budget. Provide an itemized budget to produce the deliverables described in this RFP. Include all costs related to personnel (identify all proposed personnel, including project manager, and estimated hours and rate for each), administrative overhead, travel, materials, equipment, and any other anticipated expenditures required to complete the work described in this RFP. In this budget description, describe leveraging of existing work, funding, or other in-kind services. They generally include administrative or other support functions such as executive oversight, institutional communication networks, accounting, grants management, legal support, insurance, utilities, technology, rent, and facility maintenance." For purposes of this RFP, direct costs include all of the expenses that are required for, and

can be tracked directly to, this project, including but not limited to personnel, consultants/contractors, or other direct expenses such as travel, training, supplies, computers, and software.

The total budget is not to exceed \$25,000.

- vi. Team structure and qualifications. Please provide the following:
- Project team organization chart, including a brief description of the role of each team member.
 - Summary of the experience, skill or unique attribute of each team member. Description of the team's understanding of the technical aspects of this RFP will be very helpful in this summary. In addition, including a maximum two-page resume for each team member is allowable in a "resumes" appendix.
 - Summary of related, successful projects that illustrate the capabilities and qualifications of the project team. In addition, providing a maximum two-page description of up to two recently-completed projects is allowable in a "related experience" appendix. Include references that NROC may contact for these projects.
 - Proposals must identify any tasks which will be assigned to subcontractors and associated budget details include in part v above. The successful bidder will be required to not subcontract, assign, or transfer any listed responsibilities, without prior review and consent of NROC.

Part 3: Evaluation of Proposals

This section summarizes the general process and criteria NROC intends to use to evaluate proposals.

1. **General review process.** The NROC Coordinator will collect and assemble all proposals received by the RFP deadline. An evaluation team comprised of NROC members and staff will be convened to evaluate and score all proposals, using the criteria below. Upon completion of the scoring process, the evaluation team will recommend to the NROC Executive Committee that the highest scoring bidder be awarded the project.
2. **Criteria.** NROC will use score all proposals according to the following criteria:
 - a. *Approach (30%).* Bidders will be evaluated on the detail, clarity, and soundness of their approach to this project, including strategies for overcoming any potential obstacles, creativity, and cost effectiveness.
 - b. *Qualifications and experience of project team (30%).* NROC will evaluate a project team members' combination of education, training, and record of achievement and experience related to the tasks described in this RFP.

- c. *Cost Effectiveness* (20%). Bidders will be evaluated on the budget submitted with their responses to this RFP.
- d. *Project Management* (20%). Bidders will be evaluated on their ability to complete the project within the schedule provided, track record of project management, and proposed project management strategies for this project.

Part 4. General Provisions

The following general provisions apply to this RFP and subsequent actions taken by NROC.

1. Response to this RFP does not commit NROC to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred during the preparation of the proposal.
2. Applicants must meet US federal contract requirements for receipt of federal funds. This contract is contingent upon approval of funder.
3. NROC reserves the right to reject any or all of the proposals for completing this work. NROC also reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP at any time.
4. NROC reserves the right to eliminate the need for the selected bidders to complete one
 - a. or more tasks, pending the outcome of preceding related tasks or issues, and/or the availability of project partners to complete that task.
5. NROC reserves the right to modify the final scope of work and deliverables prior to
 - a. finalizing a contractual agreement with the selected bidder(s).
6. Subsequent procurement, if any, will be in accordance with an executed contract. This RFP and any response may, at NROC's discretion, become part of the executed contract.
7. All entities participating in this RFP process will be notified of acceptance or rejection. NROC reserves the right not to disclose reasons for the rejection. NROC is not obligated to accept the proposal with the lowest cost.
8. No publicity or media release about this RFP, response to this RFP, discussion of any kind related to this RFP, or the award of any contract related to the bid document, may be released without NROC's prior approval.
9. All materials submitted by bidders become the property of NROC. NROC will retain copies of all proposals for historical records and documentation.
10. Each Bidder agrees to comply with all federal regulations including those pertaining to
 - a. non-discrimination in hiring and employment practices.
11. NROC owns all rights to deliverables and, within the bounds of acceptable practice as determined by limitations placed upon data used in this project by data providers, intends that products resulting from this project will be made publically available.