



NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION/PROPOSALS West Michigan Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis

Issue Date: November 15, 2024

Proposal Due Date: December 11, 2024

Project: West Michigan Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis

Address Proposal to: Ms. Erin Kuhn, Executive Director
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC)
316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340
Muskegon, MI 49440
Phone: 231-722-7878 extension 180
E-Mail: ekuhn@wmsrdc.org

AWARD OF CONTRACT / REJECTION OF PROPOSALS:

The Contract will be awarded to the most responsive consultant based on the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) review of the Respondents ability to provide the required products/services.

Competitive negotiation proposals are being solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources to permit a reasonable comparison consistent with the nature of competitive negotiation. The Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/P) identifies all significant evaluation factors to ensure equal information is given to all vendors involved in the bidding process. The award of the bid will be made based on the recommendation of the procuring party with consideration being given to whose proposal will be the most advantageous rather than the lowest cost.

WMSRDC reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals and to waive any irregularity in proposals received whenever such rejection or waiver is in WMSRDC's best interest. The Respondent to whom the Award is made will be notified at the earliest possible date.

This contract would be subject to and impose applicable conditions and requirements of EDA Award #ED24CHIOG0585, including 2 CFR, Part 200.

The Contract shall not be considered executed unless signed by Erin Kuhn, Executive Director, West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, and funds are available from the United States Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA).

SIGNATURES:

The Proposal and Award page and any proposal notifications, claims or statements must be signed by an official of the proposing organization authorized to bind the Respondent to the provision of the RFQ/P.

NOT TO EXCEED OR NON-APPROPRIATION:

The Respondent hereby recognizes that funding for the **West Michigan Agriculture Impact Analysis** is being provided by funds received by WMSRDC from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). If, for any reason, funding is not available or discontinued for any reason from the EDA to WMSRDC, WMSRDC may terminate this agreement without incurring any liability. WMSRDC will only be responsible for reimbursing the Respondent for the expenditures that are eligible for reimbursement from EDA.

TYPE OF CONTRACT:

It is proposed that a contract entered into as a result of this RFQ/P will have a fee structure with a specified maximum, not to be exceeded, cost. Negotiations may be undertaken with those Respondents whose proposal as to price and other factors show them to be qualified, responsible and capable of performing the work. The contract that may be entered into will be that which is most advantageous to WMSRDC, price and other factors considered. WMSRDC reserves the right to consider proposal modifications received at any time before the award is made, if such action is deemed to be in the best interest of WMSRDC.

CONTRACT EXTENSIONS:

This contract will be for a period from approximately **January 1 through August 31, 2025**. A contract extension is not expected under this funding source. However, if WMSRDC receives additional funding for project continuation or if the grant agreement contract sunset dates are extended, the contract may be extended mutually by WMSRDC and the Respondent but is limited to the terms and conditions of this request and any resulting contract.

INCURRING COSTS:

WMSRDC shall not be liable for any costs, including any travel, incurred by the Respondent prior to award of the contract(s). Total liability of WMSRDC is limited to the terms and conditions of this request and any resulting contract.

NO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS:

It is agreed and understood that the contract is made solely for the benefit of WMSRDC and the Provider of Services, not made for the benefit of any third party, and that no action or defense may be founded upon this contract except by the parties signatory hereto.

ORAL PRESENTATION:

Respondents who submit a proposal may be required to make an oral presentation of their proposal to WMSRDC. These presentations will provide an opportunity for the respondent to clarify its proposal to ensure mutual understanding of its contents.

ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL CONTENT:

The contents of the proposal of the successful Respondent will become contractual obligations, if a contract is issued. Failure of the successful bidder to accept these obligations will result in cancellation of the award.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS/COMPETITIVE NEGOTIATION PROPOSAL**BACKGROUND:**

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) under an agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration is requesting proposals for a consultant to assist WMSRDC in the development of an Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis focused on the West Michigan region including the counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana. The Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis will provide a comprehensive overview of the region's agricultural processing sector, identifying key contributions, supply chain linkages, and market opportunities for primary, secondary, tertiary, and by-product processing of food, fiber, and fuel products. Additionally, the analysis will compare the WMSRDC region's agricultural data with Kent and Ottawa counties to provide broader context. This study is particularly timely, due to the placement of an Economic Development Fellow in the WMSRDC region through the Economic Recover Corp of the International Economic Development Council. The study will assist the Fellow and regional stakeholders in identifying opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for enhancing the region's agricultural capacity, efficiency, and economic contributions.

An additional component of the grant will have Michigan State University Remote Sensing & GIS Research and Outreach Services, as a sub-recipient of the grant, develop sector asset mapping for presenting agriculture economic information in an intuitive and informative manner through online technology. Outputs of the asset mapping component will include web mapping applications to inform WMSRDC, project partners, and regional stakeholders. Asset mapping components include the following:

- Data Mining and Data Development
 - Publicly Available Data
 - Economic Data
- Hub Site Development
- Web Mapping Applications
 - Agricultural Economics Story Map
 - Agricultural Logistics Web Mapping Application
 - Agricultural Resources Web Mapping Application
- Network Analysis

- System Maintenance and Hosting

In summary, the West Michigan Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis aims to assess the economic impact of the agricultural processing industry within the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) region, focusing on Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana counties. The final report will identify opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for enhancing the region's agricultural capacity, efficiency, and economic contributions.

The total project is to be completed by August 31, 2024 (final status report, invoice and professional reimbursement request form to be submitted to WMSRDC no later than September 7, 2024). The study area for the project is the West Michigan region including the counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana.

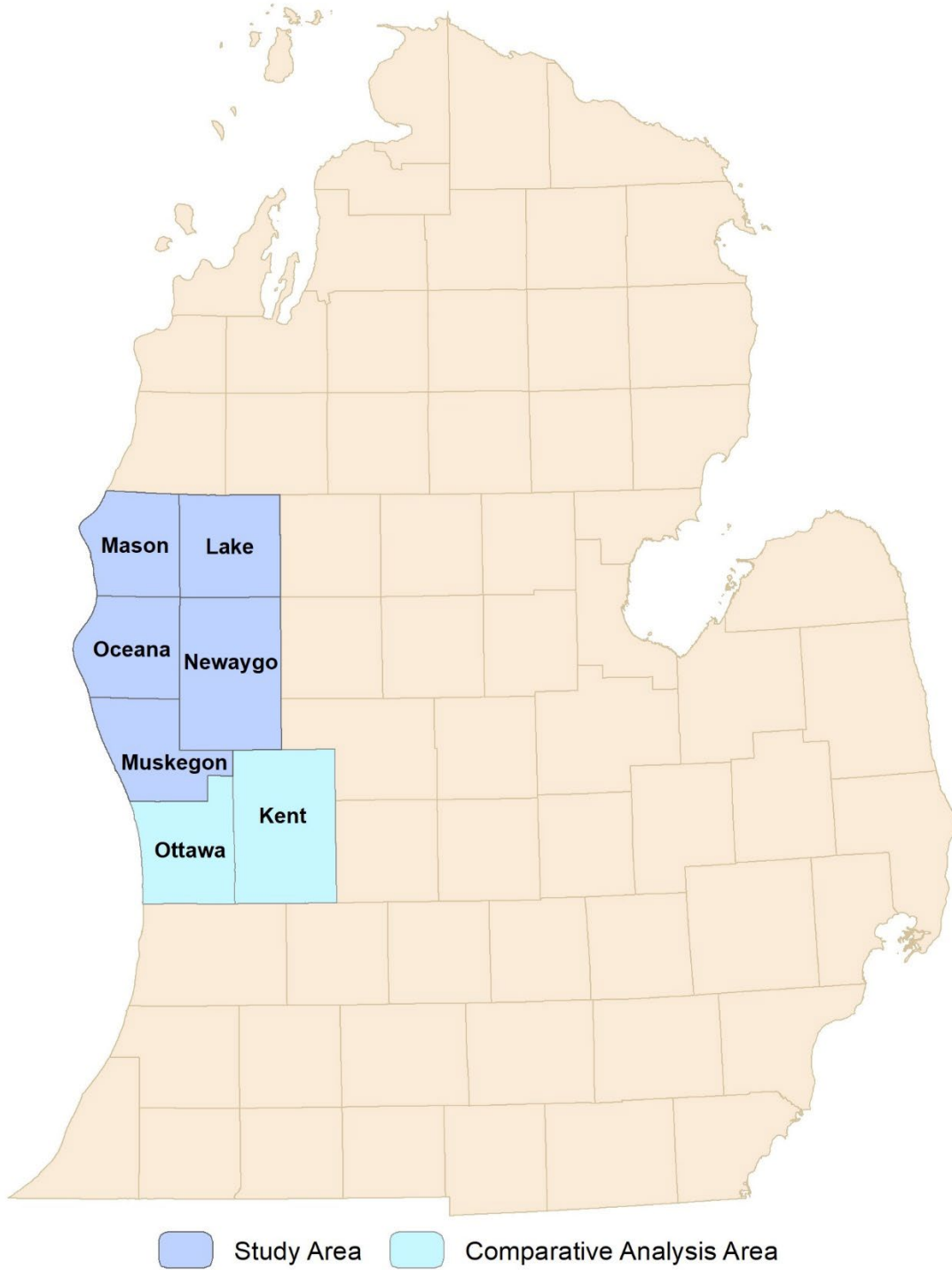
WMSRDC will enter into a contractual agreement with a consultant for this Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis project. **The total amount for the portion of the project solicited in this RFP/Q is estimated to be \$150,000.** The services requested include four major components. Interested consultants may wish to submit a proposal for any or all of the following:

- 1. Economic impact analysis report, including direct and indirect effects of the agricultural processing sector.**
- 2. Regional and county-level agriculture sector profiles.**
- 3. Comparative analysis report with data from Kent and Ottawa counties.**
- 4. Final comprehensive report with strategic recommendations for regional agricultural development.**

WMSRDC will make payment for services, according to a contractual agreement to be negotiated upon selection of a consultant. WMSRDC will act as the primary project contact for media communication, projects, and grant reporting to the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

SITE LOCATION MAP:

West Michigan Agricultural Cluster Impact Analysis



PRODUCTS and SERVICES:

WMSRDC is requesting an Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis for the project described above.

PROPOSAL FORMAT:

The Proposal Statement shall include, at a minimum:

1. A Project Understanding Statement.
2. Itemized Scope of Services, based on your understanding of the Project Goals and Tasks.
3. Not to exceed cost proposal, outlining the tasks, hours & fees.
4. Qualification Statement (shall include, at a minimum):
 - a. The project team and their relative experience on similar projects during the last five years.
 - b. Resumes of the project team.
 - c. A brief statement about your firm as it relates to this type of project.

The Cost Proposal Table shall include the tasks and sub-tasks under the following heading/categories:

1. Task (with a brief task description).
2. Hours (for each task by project personnel).
3. Costs (for project personnel).
4. Total, Not to Exceed Cost.
5. Any other additional, relevant categories.
6. A separate table with hourly rates for project personnel.

The Scope of Work and Cost Proposal Table should show these Tasks and Sub-Tasks (and any other appropriate tasks):

1. Economic Impact Analysis
 - a. Perform a comprehensive economic impact analysis of the agricultural sector within the study area.
 - i. Assess the direct economic contributions of the agricultural processing industry, including primary, secondary, tertiary, and by-product processing of food, fiber, fuel, and forestry products. Include revenue generation, tax impact, job creation, and workforce development.
 - ii. Analyze the indirect and induced economic effects of agriculture processing, focusing on upstream and downstream supply chain linkages (e.g. producers, workforce, equipment suppliers, distributors).
 - iii. Conduct a market analysis of emerging opportunities (e.g. biodiesel production from organic waste).
2. Develop economic profiles for the study area, as well as each county individually, highlighting specific opportunities, strengths, and challenges.
3. Comparative Analysis

- a. Collect agricultural processing data from Kent and Ottawa counties to provide comparative context to the study area.
 - b. Analyze similarities and differences between the study area and Kent and Ottawa counties in terms of agricultural production, supply chain integration, and economic impact.
 - c. Identify potential areas for regional collaboration and opportunities for shared investments or initiatives.
4. Final Report and Recommendations:
 - a. Develop a comprehensive report outlining the key findings from the economic impact analysis and comparative analysis.
 - b. Provide strategic recommendations aimed at expanding value-added processing capabilities, and exploring new market opportunities (e.g., biodiesel production, agricultural innovation).
 - c. Include actionable insights for regional collaboration and investment strategies to support ongoing and future agricultural development efforts.
 - d. Present findings to regional stakeholders, including WMSRDC, local government entities, the agricultural industry, and regional stakeholders.
 5. Cost Proposal Table including Grand Total

WMSRDC PROVIDED SERVICES:

1. Stakeholder Engagement
 - a. Establish a steering committee with representation from each of the five counties to provide ongoing guidance and feedback on the study.
 - b. Convene a larger stakeholder group of public and private entities, including local producers, processors, economic development agencies, agricultural organizations, and institutions of higher education.
 - c. Conduct workshops or focus group sessions to validate findings and ensure the study reflects the needs and perspectives of the agricultural community.
 - d. Use stakeholder input to refine conclusions and ensure practical, actionable recommendations.

TIMELINE:

- Project kick-off: January 2025
- Economic Impact Analysis: February - April 2025
- Comparative Analysis: May - June 2025
- Stakeholder Engagement: Ongoing throughout the project
- Draft Report: July 2025
- Final Report Submission: August 2025

Upon selection of a consultant, WMSRDC will develop a contract between the consultant and WMSRDC for final agreement within approximately 10 days.

Proposals can be submitted by mail or electronically. If submitted by mail, a minimum of four (4) copies of your proposal must be submitted and marked “West Michigan Agriculture Cluster Impact Analysis,” addressed and delivered to:

Ms. Erin Kuhn, Executive Director
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission
316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340
Muskegon, MI 49440

ekuhn@wmsrdc.org

REQUIRED TIME FOR RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS:

Sealed Proposals must be received in the office of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission no later than **1:00 PM, December 11, 2024**. Late submittals will not be accepted and will be returned unopened. A public bid opening will be held at **1:30 PM, December 11, 2024** at WMSRDC, 3rd Floor, 316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340 (Terrace Plaza Building), Muskegon, Michigan.

CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS:

WMSRDC staff and representatives from the regional steering committee will review the proposals, and evaluate them based on the information provided. All submittals will be evaluated and ranked accordingly.

At the discretion of the WMSRDC:

1. Interviews may be held as part of the evaluation process.
2. Negotiations may be a part of the selection process.

If the WMSRDC chooses to negotiate an agreement using the terms of the original proposal as a basis, the negotiations will be held beginning with the top ranked firm and proceeding in order until an acceptable agreement is reached with a firm.

SCHEDULE:

WMSRDC will implement the following schedule for the RFQ/P process:

- RFQ/P distributed to a number of qualified consultants on November 15, 2024.
- RPO/P follow up questions may be submitted, in writing, to ekuhn@wmsrdc.org until 12:00 noon, November 27, 2024. Responses will be provided to all consultants included in the RFP process and posted on the WMSRDC website by COB Tuesday, December 3, 2024.
- Proposals due at WMSRDC by 1:00 PM, December 11, 2024.
- Public bid opening to be held at 1:30 PM, December 11, 2024 at WMSRDC, 3rd Floor, 316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340 (Terrace Plaza Building), Muskegon, Michigan.
- Proposal Review and Selection will be held within 7 business days, following the public bid opening.

- Notification of selection will occur within approximately one to three business days following the selection date.
- Contract award date will occur within approximately seven days following the notification date.