



## **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

### **CONSULTANT SERVICES:**

**Floodplains by Design Partnership Facilitation**

**October 2019**

## 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

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### 1.1. Project Purpose:

The [Washington Chapter of The Nature Conservancy](#) (“Conservancy”) is seeking qualifications from qualified consultants to facilitate the [Floodplains by Design](#) (FbD) leadership and work group meetings, project manage the creation of a collaborative governance structure and network collaboration systems, and support the development and implementation of cross-partnership learning programs and policy agendas.

### 1.2. Project Background:

Floodplains by Design is an ambitious public-private partnership focused on integrating and accelerating efforts to reduce flood risks and restore habitat across Washington State’s major river corridors. Historically, floodplains have been managed in a fragmented manner, driving up costs, and sometimes creating un-intended benefits to ecosystems or communities. The result has been ever increasing flood risks and the continued decline of salmon runs and water quality.

Floodplains by Design strives to align state and federal investments with locally-driven solutions that solve multiple floodplain management challenges and create a more sustainable future for people and nature. The partnership’s goal is to improve the resiliency of floodplains for the protection of human communities and the health of the ecosystem, while supporting values important in the state such as salmon and orca recovery, agriculture, a vibrant economy and outdoor recreation.

The Floodplains by Design initiative was started in 2013 as a broad-based partnership led by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Department of Ecology (Ecology), and the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP). TNC has served as the backbone organization, providing overall facilitation and leadership to the statewide effort. Ecology has administered the FbD grant program and provided staff time to contribute to the FbD effort. TNC, Ecology, and PSP have served as the Management Team for the FbD initiative.

The first phase of Floodplains by Design (2013-2018) was focused on proving a new model: a collaborative, integrated approach to river management toward significantly accelerating efforts to reduce flood risk and restore rivers. Over that period of time, partners have secured \$165M in new funding and used it to reduce flooding, restore habitat and protect farmland in dozens of communities across the state.

The next phase of Floodplains by Design will be focused on making this cutting-edge approach the norm across Washington’s floodplains, which will involve: expanding the network of practitioners and fostering increased political will; building more robust capacity and leadership locally and regionally; working to change the policy/regulatory framework that guides floodplain management; positioning for expanded funding and increased staffing resources. Momentum is building across the state to transform freshwater systems to support a resilient, thriving future. The 5-Year Strategy for Washington’s Floodplains is the roadmap designed to help us get there. The existing staffing and governance structure, however, is insufficient to implementing that roadmap.

Over the last several months the FbD Management has convened a multi-partner Strategy Group to lay out a more collaborative and effective leadership structure – one that brings more partners to the table to ensure their voices are heard and to expand the bench strength as the partnership

implements an ambitious agenda.

More information on Floodplains by Design is available online at:

<http://www.floodplainsbydesign.org/>.

### **1.3. Project Description:**

TNC is seeking to hire a consultant, a consultant team, or multiple consultants with experience in facilitating cross-sector partnerships, coalition/network building and integrated floodplain management to assist the partnership in this transition toward a more robust partnership structure and with the implementation of the 5-Year Strategy. The consultant(s) will be responsible for developing a dispersed but effective leadership structure, facilitating the FbD Management Team, Strategy Group and Action Groups, and supporting TNC and its public, private and tribal partners in executing priority work.

This work will be part of a 2-year process to build a strong, effective leadership structure and to institutionalize FbD in Washington state. It will involve bringing in a new backbone organization, creating a more dispersed and collaborative partnership model, and working with those partners to: create a substantive learning program for the FbD network, develop and advance proposals to modernize Washington's floodplain policies and institutionalize FbD values, and develop sustainable funding mechanisms for all aspects of the 5-year strategy (project implementation, capacity building, planning, policy improvement, etc).

**While we anticipate this being a two-year contract, we are likely to only scope the first year of that contract at this time.**

The scope of work will encompass the following:

- A. Support the development and implementation of a more representative and inclusive governance structure to improve the Floodplains by Design program.
  - Working with the Department of Ecology, facilitate a process to recruit/select (or create) a non-profit organization to provide backbone support to the Floodplains by Design partnership
  - Convene a diverse and effective steering group as well as focused action groups
  - Develop Memorandum of Understanding or similar document establishing partnership membership and commitments
- B. Convene and facilitate the FbD Operations Group (formerly Management Team), Strategy Group and Action Groups in a manner that builds a diverse, transparent and effective leadership system and enables the effective implementation of FbD partnership work plans. This work will entail:
  - Preparation and adoption of a Charter to document partnership norms
  - Facilitation of FbD Operations Group meetings (biweekly or monthly)
  - Facilitation of meetings of Strategy and Action Groups based on functions and focus areas (bimonthly or as needed)
  - Ensure effective coordination and communication across action groups and relevant outside agencies and organizations

- C. Increase the capacity of floodplain practitioners to design and implement capital projects by organizing workshops, trainings and peer-to-peer learning exchanges. Develop a collaborative learning strategy that supports implementation of integrated floodplain projects.
  - Identify clear priorities, strategies and actions for learning across the network that accelerates integrated project development amongst floodplain leaders and partners
  - Organize and facilitate learning exchanges (e.g. on tribal engagement) or workshops with network partners
  - Create FbD partnership memo outlining criteria and process for allocating technical assistance resources
- D. Facilitate and support collaborative efforts with tribes, local governments and floodplain stakeholders to identify policy changes to accelerate integrated floodplain projects/management.
  - Engage key partners in design thinking methodology to identify solutions to chronic project barriers that could be resolved through technology, process or policy changes
  - Identify and prioritize potential specific policy changes that would to improve the delivery and efficacy of integrated floodplain projects
  - Secure input from key tribes, local governments and important stakeholders (private, public) and revise priorities as needed

1.4. Deliverables (due 6/30/2020 except where noted):

- Steering and Action Groups convened with diverse representation (all but Measures & Science Action Group convened by 11/30/2019)
- Approved partnership charter (1/31/2020)
- At least 16 FbD meeting agendas and summaries per year – e.g. monthly Operations Group mtgs; quarterly Strategy Group and Action Group meetings
- Decision memo regarding non-profit backbone organization
- Memorandum of understanding/agreement signed by partnership members
- Written document describing learning priorities, strategies, and actions
- 2 learning exchanges and/or workshops (9/30/2020)
- Guidance document for how to distribute FbD technical assistance resources to watersheds
- Technical memo outlining project barriers and proposed solutions

TNC intends to cover these three efforts as part of a single contract or through multiple contracts, depending on the skill sets of the submitting consultants and consultant teams. TNC may choose to select and contract with one, two, or three consultants or consultant teams.

1.5. **Consultant Qualifications:**

To be considered for the Project, consultants or consultant teams must have:

- experience designing and facilitating multi-stakeholder projects or processes,
- proven ability to work with tribal, local, state and federal entities,
- experience supporting diverse partnerships or networks,
- excellent project management skills,
- an understanding of floodplain management policies and programs, and
- applied knowledge of collective impact or systems change theory.

Prior experience in Washington State and a demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is helpful.

**1.6. Budget and Timeline:**

The first phase of this project will run from November 2019 to September 2020. The second phase will extend another 9-12 months beyond that. We plan to craft a contract to cover both phases, but only fund the first phase of this work at this time. The scope of the second phase will be informed by the tasks and deliverables of phase one.

**1.7. Submission Requirements:**

The bidding process will be conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner with fair treatment given to all prospective respondents. Consultant shall be responsible for any and all costs incurred by the Consultant in responding to this request. The Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) should be no longer than 20 pages. The Consultant's SOQ must contain sufficient information to allow the Project Team to evaluate the Consultant's ability to perform the required tasks, including:

- (a) **cover letter** summarizing the key elements of the respondent's SOQ and an overview of the consultant team and project manager;
- (b) the **proposed team** for the Project (including each person's full name, title, location, telephone number, email, and qualifications);
- (c) a **description of Consultant qualifications**, including examples of relevant project experience; and
- (d) at least **three (3) references**, including a contact name and phone number to reach each reference directly.

**All submittals must be submitted via email to Courtney Baxter at [courtney.baxter@tnc.org](mailto:courtney.baxter@tnc.org) .**

**1.8. Critical Dates:**

**1.5.1. Questions regarding this RFQ:**

Any questions about this request must be submitted via email to [courtney.baxter@tnc.org](mailto:courtney.baxter@tnc.org) no later than noon on October 11, 2019. The Conservancy will use its best efforts to answer questions by Oct 18, 2019. It is the policy of the Conservancy to avoid situations that (a) place it in a position where its judgment may be biased; (b) create an appearance of conflict of interest with respect to rendering an impartial, fair, technically sound, and objective decision prior to selection; or (c) give an unfair competitive

advantage to competing bidders. The Consultant acknowledges that (a) answers provided by the Conservancy to any respondent inquiries will be shared with all respondents (via email or otherwise), and (b) the Conservancy is not required to supply answers that the Conservancy does not consider to be pertinent to this RFQ or are considered by the Conservancy to be proprietary or confidential.

1.5.2. Submittal due date:

All SOQs must be emailed to the Conservancy by 5:00 p.m. PT on **October 27, 2019**.

1.9. **Review of SOQs:**

SOQs will be reviewed and evaluated by the Project Team based upon each respondent's qualifications, experience, and references. All bidders will be notified of their selection or rejection by email (or other form of writing) in November 2020. The Conservancy reserves the right to reject any SOQ for any reason and the Conservancy is not obligated to select any respondent at all, nor will the Conservancy be obligated to explain the basis for its selection. All material submitted in response to this RFQ will become the property of the Conservancy and may be returned only at the option of the Conservancy and at Consultant's expense.

The Conservancy shall have no obligations or liabilities whatsoever by reason of issuance of this RFQ or actions by anyone relating thereto.