



**Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
Request for Proposals for Evaluation of the Regional Technical Forum**

**Proposals Due:
June 2, 2009
Intent to Respond Due:
May 19, 2009**

1. Introduction

This request for proposals seeks professional services to conduct an evaluation of the Regional Technical Forum. Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) will issue a time-and-materials contract, not to exceed \$75,000.

NEEA is a non-profit corporation supported by electric utilities, public benefits administrators, state governments, public interest groups and energy efficiency industry representatives that operate in the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. These entities work together to make affordable, energy-efficient products and services available in the marketplace. For further information on NEEA please visit our website at <http://www.nwalliance.org>.

NEEA is administering this RFP and will manage the evaluation effort on behalf of the Northwest Energy Efficiency Taskforce (NEET), a collaboration of utilities, government agencies, industry leaders, legislators, community action groups, consultants, educators, environmental advocates and others. The NEET partnership looks to advance the region's energy efficiency achievement through greater regional collaboration, commitment, customer involvement, and pursuit of the most cost-effective strategies. As part of NEET's energy efficiency planning process, the partnership is calling for an evaluation of the Regional Technical Forum, a key source of the region's technical and analytical support as it pertains to energy efficiency.

2. Project Background and Purpose

In 1996 Congress directed Bonneville and the Northwest Power Planning Council (Council) to convene a Regional Technical Forum (RTF) to develop standardized protocols for verifying and evaluating conservation savings. Congress further recommended that the RTF's membership include individuals with technical expertise in conservation program planning, implementation, and evaluation and that its services be made available to all utilities in the Northwest.

The Regional Technical Forum was formed in July of 1999, with members appointed by the Council Power Division Director. Membership required technical expertise and included

members from utilities, state energy offices, energy service companies, consultants and public interest groups, and Bonneville. The RTF is staffed by Council staff supported under Council budget. Council staff leading the RTF are also responsible for developing the Council's conservation potential as part of the Regional Power Plan produced every five years.

Since its formation, the RTF has and continues to provide Bonneville and the region's utilities with a wide range of technical and analytical support, including providing regional cost-effectiveness methodology and software, maintaining a comprehensive database of cost-effective conservation measures and practices, providing standardized protocols for estimating savings from measures and efficiency programs, and other functions.

After ten years, the role of the RTF has evolved to accommodate the changing needs of the region. As such, there is a need to conduct a comprehensive review to better understand where the RTF stands today, how it got there, and the most effective path for it to follow in the future. The results of the evaluation will be used to inform future policy decisions on how the RTF can best meet the region's needs in a number of functions: data collection, analysis, evaluation and dissemination of findings.

(*note: there is a specific document called the 'charter' of the RTF which has not changed, and is subject to some interpretation.)

3. Evaluation Objectives

Key evaluation objectives will be to assess the following aspects of the Regional Technical Forum:

3.1. Describe RTF Governance, Staffing and Funding

(Task 4.2)

- 3.1.1. What is the current governance structure, including management and oversight?
- 3.1.2. What are the conflict of interest rules?
- 3.1.3. What are roles and responsibilities of staff and governing bodies?
- 3.1.4. How is the RTF currently staffed, both internal staff and contractor support?
- 3.1.5. What is the current level of funding? Who funds?
- 3.1.6. How are RTF members selected? Are there member categories/quotas? Are any compensated? (why or why not).
- 3.1.7. What is the relationship to the Bonneville Power Administration?
- 3.1.8. What is the relationship to the Power Council
- 3.1.9. What is the relationship to NEEA

3.2. Describe/Assess RTF Charter Activities

(Tasks: 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)

- 3.2.1. Savings estimation for electricity measures (regional and local applicability)
 - 3.2.1.1. Savings due to physical measures, i.e. equipment installed or designs for structures that are built.
 - 3.2.1.2. Savings related to operations and maintenance practices and other forms of customer behavior
 - 3.2.1.3. Savings related to the adoption of codes and standards
- 3.2.2. Cost estimation (regional and local applicability)
- 3.2.3. Savings Persistence

- 3.2.4. Energy efficiency measures
- 3.2.5. Electric generation Avoided Costs
- 3.2.6. Cost-effectiveness calculations and the implications of cost-effectiveness rules on claiming savings and running utility programs, including use of these calculations by BPA in determining eligibility and willingness to pay for measures in its rate credit programs
- 3.2.7. Measurement & Verification (M&V) Protocols
- 3.2.8. Planning, Tracking, and Reporting System (PTR) – What is the breakdown of roles and responsibilities in keeping the system up to date? (RTF, BPA and software limitations)
- 3.2.9. Renewables – is the RTF doing any work related to renewables now?
- 3.2.10. Natural Gas – The RTF does not address energy efficiency measures for natural gas; should the scope be expanded to cover all energy forms?
- 3.2.11. IOU/State commissions: cost recovery
- 3.2.12. BPA Program
- 3.2.13. NEEA activities
- 3.2.14. Other

3.3. Describe/Assess Current RTF Activities

(Tasks: 4.3, 4.4, 4.5)

- 3.3.1. What are the products the RTF produces and how does the region use them?
- 3.3.2. How are work/topics selected, prioritized and managed?
 - 3.3.2.1. What is the typical timeline for reviewing specific measures?
 - 3.3.2.2. What level of effort is allocated for specific measures or topics? Are there criteria determining the level of effort?
- 3.3.3. How is that work then accomplished? Through RTF staff? Through contractors? A combination of staff and contractors?
- 3.3.4. For work that is accomplished through contractors, what is the process for selecting contractors? Is there an RFP/competitive bidding process? Is some or all work sole-sourced?
- 3.3.5. To what degree has the RTF relied on a single contractor for evaluations or other work products? Are the evaluation tools the contractors use publicly available or are they proprietary?
- 3.3.6. What is the current budget, including both “indirect” as well as direct funding?

3.4. Gather Regional Feedback: Perceptions of RTF Current & Future Role, Functioning, Value, etc.

(Task: 4.3, 4.4, 4.5)

- 3.4.1. Governance structure and staffing, including suggestions of:
 - Appropriate level of oversight
 - Skill sets of staff and membership
 - Conflicts of interest
 - Membership selection
- 3.4.2. Relationship between RTF & Bonneville Power Administration
- 3.4.3. Relationship between RTF and NEEA

3.4.4. Is the Northwest Power and Conservation Council the appropriate organization to house/administer the RTF?

3.4.5. Funding issues:

- Level
- Source(s)
- Stability
- Possible limits on use
- Ability to increase
- Should there be other funders (e.g., private sector)?

3.4.6. Current activities including:

- Use of the RTF's work products in regional organizations
- Perceived regional value
- Method for assigning RTF costs in the region: how do utilities or other funders account for RTF funding (e.g., vis-à-vis cost-effectiveness)?

3.4.7. Future role of the RTF

- What do regional stakeholders need from the RTF?
- What is the perception of what the RTF's appropriate role should be?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the RTF?

3.4.8. Does the RTF influence other regions?

What, if anything, is the interaction with California and New England? What is RTF role at a national level, in particular influence on national standards

3.5. Assess the implications (benefits and downsides/risks) of expanding the RTF's mission.

[Note that this objective is to have a balanced assessment of benefits and risks, pros and cons associated with a potentially expanded mission—based on information collected from interviews. It is NOT for a recommendation.]

3.6. Provide Insights/Ideas for Consideration

Based on the information collected, the contractor should offer insights and ideas for consideration that it believes would be pertinent to the future functioning of the RTF. Also, to the extent that the contractor has expertise in the governance, organizational structure and decision-making of similar types of organizations, the contractor should contrast aspects of the RTF functioning with effective practices at similar organizations. [Note that this objective is to gain insights and ideas regarding the future functioning of the RTF. The contractor should take care to present these ideas as “food for thought” based on observations—not as recommended actions/decisions.]

4. Tasks

The contractor will conduct the following tasks:

4.1. Develop a work plan (See 6.1)

- 4.2. Conduct a thorough document review.** Contractor shall review charter documents concerning RTF governance and staffing.
- 4.3. Conduct Founder Interviews.** Founder interviews will be utilized to gather information on the history of the RTF (3-4 people; list provided by NEEA).
- 4.4. Conduct Staff and Member Interviews.** Contractor will assess the current state of the RTF through staff and member interviews (10-12 people; list provided by NEEA).
- 4.5. Conduct Regional Stakeholder Interviews.** Contractor will assess regional perceptions on the future role of the RTF (40-50 interviews; list provided by NEEA).
- 4.6. Analyze Results**
The evaluation contractor shall compile and synthesize the gathered information into well-organized findings.
- 4.7. Provide Insights/Ideas for Consideration**
See description in 3.6 above.
- 4.8. Write Report**
The contractor shall compile the findings, analysis and recommendations into a report (see deliverables for more detail).

5. Report Elements

The evaluation report will include the following:

- 5.1.** Executive summary (1-3 pages).
- 5.2.** A retrospective summary of the Regional Technical Forum, from its origin to today, including key changes that have occurred over time and why.
- 5.3.** Summary findings on current functioning of RTF.
- 5.4.** Summary findings on regional needs and perceptions of the appropriate role of the RTF.
- 5.5.** Conclusions, Ideas for Consideration

6. Deliverables & Schedule

6.1. Work Plan

The evaluation contractor shall submit a draft work plan to be presented and discussed at a kick-off meeting. The plan will describe how the evaluation contractor will proceed with the research, data collection, analysis, report preparation, and other proposed activities. The plan will consist of the following:

- Schedule of the major evaluation tasks, including start up, milestones, and completion dates for each task;
- High-level outline of evaluation report

- Time and effort required for each major evaluation task; and
- Contractor staff person responsible for each task.

Agreed-upon revisions will be incorporated into a final version that will serve as the basis for the final statement of work that is an attachment to the contract between NEEA and the evaluation contractor. It shall specify the responsible party for each task.

6.2. Kickoff Meeting

The kick-off meeting will be held in the Portland area the week of July 6, 2009. During this meeting, the Contractor shall present their proposed work plan to the NEEA Project Manager and NEET committee members. The work plan will describe how the Contractor will proceed with the research, analysis, report preparation, and other proposed evaluation activities. It shall specify the responsible party for each activity.

6.3. Survey/Data Collection Instrument(s)

The evaluation contractor shall deliver all survey/data collection instruments and recruitment materials to the NEEA project manager for review and feedback. The NEEA project manager must sign off on all final instruments.

6.4. Monthly Status Reports

The contractor shall submit written Monthly Status Reports to the NEEA Project Manager outlining project progress by task, detailing work done under each task and with a discussion of any difficulties or problems encountered and how they were resolved, and a schedule for the next month's activities. These reports are due by the 10th of every month, starting with the first month after the final Work Plan has been accepted, and must follow the format laid out in the final contract. These reports generally accompany the monthly invoice; monthly invoices will not be processed prior to receipt of the Monthly Status Report.

6.5. Draft and Final Evaluation Reports

6.5.1. Draft Report

A draft report discussing the findings of the contractor is due no later than September 18, 2009. This draft will be reviewed and commented on by the NEEA Project Manager and NEET committee members. Based on these comments, the contractor shall make revisions and deliver to NEEA a final version of the report. Achieving an acceptable final report may take more than one iteration between the Contractor and NEEA. Where applicable, data, phone conversations, non-confidential sources, publications, and other media used in the report must be referenced and cited. (It is anticipated that any respondents or sources can be promised confidentiality in terms of attribution of their responses in the written report.) Findings and conclusions shall be based on the information collected by the evaluator and referenced in the report. The use of tables and graphs is recommended for material that does not lend itself well to narrative form, as well as for visual representation of important findings. All reports must include, at a minimum, a “stand alone” executive summary, introduction, methods, and overall conclusions sections.

6.5.2. Final Report

This contract will include the delivery of one Evaluation Report, documenting the historic and potential future role, scope, charter, function and funding of the Regional Technical Forum. The report will summarize findings from the document review, founder interviews, staff and member interviews, as well as regional stakeholder interviews. The report should tell the story of the RTF’s history, its evolution over time, where it is today and how it got there, and the region’s perception of the role it should assume, going forward. The report should also document regional feedback on what’s working well with the RTF, what’s not working as well, and any recommended changes heard during the evaluation. A final report incorporating NEEA’s and NEET’s comments will be due no later than October 9, 2009.

Table 1. Schedule

	Date
Contract Awarded	June 19, 2009
Kick-off meeting	Week of July 6, 2009
Monthly Status Reports	July – October
Draft RTF Evaluation Report	September 18, 2009
Final RTF Evaluation Report	October 9, 2009

7. Product Quality

Each bidder’s proposal will be considered an example of the writing style to be used in reports for this project. Bidders are strongly urged to retain the services of a professional editor. NEEA

reserves the right to reject and withhold payment for any document that is not clearly written, grammatically correct, or does not use Standard English. Please see the summary of NEEA's Writing Style Requirements (Appendix B of this Request for Proposals) for more details.

8. Proposal Submission and Selection

8.1 Contents

Bidders must address the following in their proposals:

- Proposed specific tasks that will be conducted in order to meet the deliverables specified in this RFP.
- Proposed methodologies/approach for accomplishing proposed tasks.
- Proposed timing for specific tasks and deliverables.
- High-level outline of contents to be included in final report.
- Proposed staffing, and qualifications of proposed staff.
Proposed staffing—team composition and personnel—is a significant factor in bidder selection. As such, bidders should carefully consider this element of the proposal. In particular, bidders should clarify staffing qualifications related to:
 - questionnaire design
 - data collection
 - data analysis
 - report writing
- Estimate of time and materials required to complete each of the proposed tasks, including the dollars and hours per staff estimated for each task.
- Finalists may be requested to submit applicable work samples for review. Note: all materials will be returned following final contractor selection.

Proposals must not exceed 10 pages. Information on staff and firm qualifications should be included as an appendix to the proposal and is not included in this 10-page limit.

8.2 Intent to Respond

NEEA will only consider proposals from parties who have submitted an "Intent to Respond" form (Appendix A) indicating their intent to respond. All Intent to Respond forms must be received by NEEA no later than 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Tuesday, May 19, 2009. These may be sent via fax, mail or electronic mail. Only those parties submitting the Intent to Respond form will be provided with updates to the RFP, receive answers to questions for all bidders to view and have their proposals considered.

8.3 Submission

Proposers must submit an electronic copy (MS-Word, any version) and one hard copy of their technical and cost proposals by 4:00 PM Pacific Time on Friday, June 2, 2009 to:

Michelle Levy
Market Research and Evaluation Project Manager
Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
529 SW Third Avenue, Suite 600
Portland, OR 97204

Phone: (503) 827-8416 x252 or 800-411-0834, ext. 252

Electronic proposals should be sent to: mlevy@nwalliance.org. FAXED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

8.4 Selection

Proposals will be rated in terms of:

1. Responsiveness to the RFP and demonstrated understanding of the issues surrounding the evaluation.
2. The thoughtfulness and appropriateness of the proposed data collection and analysis plan for evaluating the project.
3. The experience and qualifications of the individuals specifically proposed to manage and conduct the evaluation. NOTE: Proposed staffing—both composition/structure and personnel—is a significant factor in bidder selection. As such, no changes in key staff—or substitutions or changes in roles/responsibilities—can be made without the written agreement of NEEA evaluation project manager.
4. The credibility of the proposed Work Plan, from both a staffing and timing perspective. NEEA is committed to providing deliverables to the region according to schedule, and the proposal should reflect an approach that will reasonably allow the contractor to support this commitment.
5. The management plan for carrying out the evaluation, including past experience at working together if there are multiple entities represented in the bid.
6. The experience of the firm or team of firms making the proposal.
7. References from other projects and clients with regard to reliability, project management, data collection skills, analytical skill, writing skill, and adaptability.
8. Cost: the cost of the contract should be bid as time and materials, not to exceed basis. The level of effort and time devoted by key staffers will be a consideration.

NOTE: Contractors who have worked or are currently working on an evaluation or implementation project for any active Regional Technical Forum should disclose their involvement with such projects in their proposal. Likewise, respondents should disclose whether any member of the evaluation team has formerly served as a member of the Regional Technical Forum.

NEEA is under no obligation to select any proposal that results from this solicitation, nor is there any obligation or intent implied to reimburse any party for the cost of preparing a proposal in response to this RFP. NEEA encourages proposers to submit proposals that include innovative methods or tasks in addition to or different from those listed in the RFP.

APPENDIX A – INTENT TO RESPOND FORM

Request for Proposals
for an Evaluation of
the Regional Technical Forum’s Charter, Role, Scope, Function and Funding

PLEASE PRINT:

Company: _____
Address: _____
Contact Name: _____
Contact Title: _____
Telephone #: _____
Facsimile #: _____
E-mail Address: _____

The company named above intends to submit a proposal in response to NEEA’s RFP for an evaluation contractor for the Evaluation of the Regional Technical Forum. Deadline for submission of this “Intent To Respond” form is no later than 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Friday, May 8, 2009.

Signature of authorized representative: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

Submit to:

Michelle Levy
Market Research and Evaluation Project Manager
Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
529 SW Third Avenue, Suite 600
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 827-8416 x252 or 800-411-0834, ext. 252
Fax: 503-827-8437

Appendix B – NEEA Writing Style Requirements

Purpose

The purpose of all evaluation writing is to “provide unbiased, independent, empirically based information to decision-makers.” These decision-makers include the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) Board of Directors, partners/stakeholders, project planning staff, and implementation staff/contractors.

Syntax and writing style

NEEA values clarity in report writing over all other aspects of style and syntax.

There are as many ways to write reports as there are contractors and projects, but the following three maxims provide good rules for writing NEEA evaluation reports:

- Brevity is preferable to length – but not at the expense of key information.
- Let graphics tell their story with a minimum of accompanying text.
- An active voice conveys more meaning than a passive voice.

Regarding the last maxim, compare the following two sentences:

The marketing activities were completed before the end of the funding cycle. (Passive)

The contractor completed the marketing activities by the end of the funding cycle. (Active)

Both of these sentences are true and approximately the same length. However, they do not convey the same degree of meaning. The first sentence provides no understanding of who completed the marketing activities. The second (active) sentence tells us that it the contractor who was responsible for the completion. Accurate and informative evaluations provide the reader with a clear understanding of cause, effect and responsibility. The active voice is a more effective way to deliver this information.

Format and pagination

Report writers must deliver their final reports in Microsoft Word in Times New Roman.

Other than pages from the executive summary and appendices, reports must use sequential pagination rather than sectional pagination. That is, the introduction must begin with page “1” and continue in succession through the last page of the Conclusions / Recommendations section. The reports must not be paginated by section, as in 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, followed by 2-1, and 2-2, etc.

The report writer may number figures and tables consecutively or by section.

Jargon (including acronyms)

NEEA contracts for the evaluation of sophisticated technical projects that may not be familiar to all audiences. Each of these projects seems to spawn a language of its own. Report writers should define and regulate the use of these terms so that all audiences will understand the report.

Specifically, report writers must define all technical terms and acronyms upon their first occurrence in the report. In addition, the report writer should include a glossary of technical terms and acronyms in the appendices of the report when appropriate, so that readers may refer to a central source for all technical terms and acronyms.

Grammar, spelling and punctuation

NEEA expects all report writers to use proper grammar, spelling and punctuation when developing reports. *The Elements of Style* (Strunk and White) is an excellent resource for all who write for NEEA.

Citation

Report writers must accurately and properly cite all text references, as well all graphs and tables in NEEA evaluation reports in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Font size and margins

Report writers will use Times New Roman font in NEEA evaluation reports with font size for text must be 12 points. Writers may use smaller fonts in footnotes, text in tables or exhibits. All margins (top, bottom, left and right) should be 1 inch.

Report Cover

The report cover will include: the title of the Project; the date of publication; and the name of the evaluation firm. The cover must *not* include any graphics other than line-art.

Executive Summary

All final reports must contain an executive summary. An executive summary stands alone as a representation of the report's most important findings and conclusions. The summary does not serve as an introduction or abstract of the report itself. Rather, it distills the report's key issues into salient points. The executive summary should be limited to 2-3 pages with limited or no graphics.