Offshore Wind Science and Research
Solicitation 2024-OSW-02

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS - 02

Posting Date: April 02, 2024

UPDATES TO THE Solicitation

There is no further update to the Solicitation. The most recent version was posted March 26.

QUESTIONS AND MASSCEC RESPONSES

1. Cost Share

1.1. If a proposed initiative intends to heavily leverage an in-house proprietary model, where substantial labor investment has been committed to its development and ongoing maintenance:

- Would such prior investment be counted as a form of cost sharing? (07)
  - *Response: No, this would not be counted as cost share. Nevertheless, such leverage of prior investment would be considered in evaluation with respect to budget and funding, specifically "*Efficient use of MassCEC funds, . . . and the extent to which other funds are leveraged.*".*
- If yes, how would you like such prior capital investment be documented and demonstrated in the application? (07)
  - *Response: Not applicable.*

1.2. The RFP does not define what actions, expenditures, supplemental funds, investments or otherwise would or could constitute cost share.

- Could you define what actions, expenditures, supplemental funds, investments or otherwise would or could constitute cost share? (08)
  - *Response: Please refer to Sections 7(d) and 7(e) of the template grant agreement.*
- For a scope in the form of a services agreement, where a firm would perform analysis under contract to MassCEC, what forms would or could cost share take? Does it have to be some 3rd party funder also contributing dollars to the firm providing the service? Could cost share take the form of (i) a discount to the price of the service offered? (ii) prior investment in a tool to be used at no cost or reduced cost in performance of the scope? (iii) other? (08)

- *Response: MassCEC does not have a cost share requirement for service agreements. The Solicitation is being updated to reflect this.*

See also question 2.1.

1.3. [New April 2] [Potential Applicant] is preparing a concept paper in response to the open solicitation. It has come up internally at [Potential Applicant] about whether MassCEC would accept cost share emanating from available Federal program funds. The reason I ask is that under most solicitations that start from DOE or that use Federal money (e.g., NOWRDC) we are not permitted to use Federal money to cost share. Some people here are concerned that this may be the case under this opportunity.

- *Response: Please also see the response to question 2.1. In general, MassCEC's interest is that cost share come from a party other than MassCEC. As such, yes, federal funds that are available to the Applicant and applied to the proposed scope of activities may be counted as cost share. Note this language from Section 7(d) of the MassCEC template grant agreement (Solicitation Attachment D):* Grantee agrees and acknowledges that its Cost Share may be cash, documented grants from other parties (such as other state or federal agencies or charitable organizations), or a combination thereof. *MassCEC would likely apply a similar approach for an award in the form of a service agreement or a more general programmatic commitment.*

1.4. [New April 2] Can you tell me if the Cost share amount of 25% should be on Direct Costs or Total costs? (14)

- *Response: Cost share amounts referenced in Section V of the Solicitation are **preferred**, not mandatory. As such, MassCEC would prefer to see the cost share, if proposed, applied to the total costs for the activity. Applicants should provide a compelling rationale if proposed cost share is less than presented in Section V or is applied to a subset of total project costs.*

1.5. [New April 2] I have a question regarding the match component cutoff for the budget. The solicitation states that there is a 10% match requirement for MassCEC awards less than $250k and a 25% match requirement for awards greater than $250k. Can you clarify whether that $250k cutoff is for the total project budget or just the amount we are asking from MassCEC? See options A and B I've detailed below to remain at 10% match and please let me know which option is the correct interpretation of the cutoff. (11)

Category	A	B
Total Budget	$250,000	$277,778
MassCEC award	$225,000	$250,000
Match	$25,000	$27,778

- *Response: The Solicitation uses the term "cost share" rather than "match." Cost share is expressed as a percentage of overall budget for funded activities. The question highlights some challenges in having a preferred cost share percentage applied as a function of MassCEC grant amount. To address that, MassCEC is modifying the statement of preferred cost share such that the preference applies to total project budget. For projects with a total budget of less than $300,000 MassCEC prefers a cost share of ten percent (10%). For project budgets of $300,000 or greater MassCEC prefers*

a cost share of at least twenty-five percent (25%). The table below provides illustrative examples. The Solicitation is being edited and reposted to reflect this change.

Category	A	B	C	D
Total budget	$200,000	$250,000	$300,000	$400,000
Cost share %	10%	10%	25%	25%
Cost share	$20,000	$25,000	$75,000	$100,000
MassCEC award	$180,000	$225,000	$225,000	$300,000

2. Applicant Eligibility

2.1. Is the funding opportunity open to federal scientists? (06) (09)

- *Response: MassCEC does not intend to fund the participation of federal employees in research activity. Our assumption is that a federal employee on a project would be compensated by their employer. That said, a federal agency could be a participant in the science or research activity. Any compensation provided by the federal agency for its employees, or other federal support, could count as cost share.*

2.2. [New April 2] We have the following question regarding the "Offshore Wind Science and Research: Funding for Projects, Partnerships, and Initiatives" solicitation: An offshore wind consortium, an entity established by state statute and with broad representation on its Advisory Board, identifies and provides some government funding to priority research projects to inform responsible development of floating offshore wind in the region. Is the consortium an eligible entity to apply to partner with MassCEC on research projects of mutual interest in the region? (15)

- *Response: Yes, such a consortium would be an eligible Applicant*.

2.3. [New April 2] Is the "lead applicant" intended to be an individual, in which case we would list all Co-PIs as co-applicants, or is an applicant intended to be an institution, in which case co-applicants are other partner institutions. Furthermore, is the lead applicant contact person intended to be a PI, or should it be the administrative professional handling the business/contracts side. (10a)

- *Response: The Applicant will be an entity, not an individual person. From Section V: Applicants may be an individual company, organization, or institution, or may be a team of such entities (an "Applicant").*
- *Response: For submittal of Concept Papers, MassCEC prefers the Applicant contact be the principal investigator or other person responsible for the project scope. You can also include an administrative contact person if you wish but that is not required.*

3. Project Scope and Eligibility

3.1. What TRL (technology readiness level) does the research project need to target (e.g., basic research, applied research, demonstration)? (01)

- *Response: With respect to technology readiness, MassCEC is most interested in applied research and demonstration roughly corresponding to TRL 6 and higher. That said, the concept of TRL may not apply to all proposals.*

3.2. Do you think the acoustic impact modeling of noise mitigation of the device from [*name of company that submitted a funding proposal to U.S. Dept. of Energy*] would be a good fit for this? (01)

- *Response: MassCEC does not intend to provide cost share funding through this solicitation for research proposed to U.S. DOE under a DOE funding opportunity. If the proposed activities were either a cost share or supplemental to the scope proposed to U.S. DOE then the Applicant should look to MassCEC's AmplifyMass program.*

3.3. Do you think exploratory research in coupling offshore wind with aquaculture or Power to X (e.g., hydrogen generation) would be a good fit? (01)

- *Response: MassCEC would review Concept Papers related to these activities. We don't say at this stage whether such concepts would be a good fit.*

3.4. To what extent should the scope of proposed activities include coordination with organizations such as the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative on Offshore Wind and/or the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance? (02)

- *Response: For any activities related to offshore wind and wildlife, habitat, or fisheries, MassCEC recommends the Applicant include scope and budget for coordination with the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative on Offshore Wind and/or the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance.*

3.5. [What are MassCEC's] expectations for budget and time frame. Ideally, I think this could be a two year project, but could be scaled down to one year of needed. Would two years be ok? (03)

- *Response: A two-year project would be acceptable. Please refer to Section I of the Solicitation which states:*
  The Solicitation is open to a variety of proposed activities. Responses could relate to a well-defined, relatively short-term (e.g., two to three years), science or research project that could be supported through a MassCEC grant or service agreement. In this case, the response would articulate the specific scope, work plan, budget, and cost share for the proposed activity. MassCEC is also interested in proposals for longer-term (e.g., greater than three years) or more complex activities such as establishment or expansion of partnerships, collaboratives, or operations in Massachusetts. In this case, the proposal would articulate the form of technical, financial, or programmatic support that MassCEC could provide.

4. Application Requirements

4.1. Can you provide a Word version of the Attachment B - AUTHORIZED APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE AND ACCEPTANCE FORM? (04)

- *Response: MassCEC only provides this form in pdf format. It can be merged into a longer pdf document or, if necessary, it can be submitted separately.*

4.2. Can submittal of the Attachment B - AUTHORIZED APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE AND ACCEPTANCE FORM be waived for the Concept Paper submittal? (05)

- *<u>Response</u>: MassCEC no longer requires submittal of the Attachment B signature and acceptance form with Concept Papers. The solicitation is being modified and re-released to reflect this.*

4.3. [NEW April 2] One other question we had is whether or not references should be included in the text of the Project Narrative. If so, do they count toward the 3 page limit? (10b)

- *<u>Response</u>: MassCEC has not requested references. If desired, Applicants may provide references separate from the Project Narrative. These would not count toward the page limit.*

4.4. [NEW April 2] I have a question in regard to the concept paper. I noted under the requirements for the concept paper that Attachment B needs to be submitted with the concept paper submittal. I noticed under full application that attachment C needs to be submitted. When does D & E need to be submitted. (12)

- *<u>Response</u>: Regarding Attachment B, please see question/response 4.2. Attachment B is not required for Concept Papers.*
- *<u>Response</u>: Attachments D and E are template grant agreement and service agreement, respectively. Per Solicitation Section VII, item 8 in the table of application requirements calls for Full Applications to include any comments and/or proposed edits to the relevant template agreement. For example, for a Full Application requesting a grant, provide comments on the Grant Agreement, Attachment D.*

5. Budget

5.1. [NEW April 2] The [Potential Applicant] will be submitting a Concept Paper to the following [Solicitation]. Does MassCEC allow us to use our DHHS (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services) Negotiated Indirect Rate for the Proposal?

- *<u>Response</u>: Applicant may propose the Negotiated Indirect Rate but MassCEC will want to review the specific elements of the proposed indirect rate.*