***Interview Questions for Potential Environmental Consultants***

The following questions are intended to assist Tribal and Alaskan Native Village (ANV) environmental and procurement personnel with developing the information needed to make a decision on hiring an environmental consultant. More specifically, these questions are intended to draw out whether a given environmental consultant/contractor has the necessary capability, documented experience, qualifications, depth and breadth of expertise, references, credentials, registrations, insurance(s), etc., to be considered for environmental consulting work on Tribal or ANV environmental sites / projects.

***Expertise and Experience***

What specific services does the consultant see as necessary for the proposed project?

What services would the consultant specifically exclude for the proposed project? If the consultant anticipates that a certain type of service, e.g., geotechnical or geo-environmental subsurface investigation and testing, is unlikely to be needed, they may want to explicitly state this, so that both parties understand what is not being provided, as well as what is being provided.

Does the consultant anticipate unique or special conditions or considerations on the proposed project?

***Physical proximity to proposed project location(s)***

What is the distance between the consultant’s location for managing and staffing the project and the proposed project location?

Does the consultant foresee a potential need for rapid response during the course of the proposed project?

If so, how will the consultant meet this need?

***Experience working with Tribes & ANVs***

Describe environmental consulting services that the consultant has previously provided to the Tribe/ANV, or that is ongoing.

Describe environmental consulting services the consultant has previously provided to other Tribes & ANVs, or that is ongoing.

***Project leadership and staffing of proposed project***

Who will the consultant designate as project manager on the proposed project?

What is their specific experience that is relevant to the project type being considered?

What is their experience with Tribal or ANV projects? In the event that the designated project manager is unavailable, for whatever reason, who will be the consultant’s designated alternate project manager?

What is the alternate’s specific experience that is relevant to the project type under consideration?

What is the alternate’s experience with Tribal or ANV projects? Describe.

***Firm and individuals’ staff registration(s) and certification(s)***

What individual or firm registrations or certifications does the consultant offer that are applicable to the proposed project?

What is the consultant’s understanding of registration or certification criteria that apply to the proposed project?

Is the consultant willing to provide documentation of registration / certification of key staff?

***Insurance***

What relevant insurance does the consultant routinely carry?

What other types of insurance has the consultant obtained when stipulated by an owner / client?

Is the consultant willing to provide required certificates of insurance?

***Data and information confidentiality; software***

What experience does the consultant and any consultant subcontractors have with maintaining confidentiality of sensitive cultural or other types of information? Provide relevant examples from work with Tribes or ANVs.

***Schedule and Cost Control***

What practices does the consultant utilize to control and adhere to project schedules?

What practices does the consultant utilize to manage project budgets?

***Reports, Data and Software***

What reports to the Tribe or ANV, interim and final, does the consultant anticipate submitting for this project?

What project management tools will the consultant use for the proposed project? What if any outputs from these tools will be made available to the Tribe or ANV?

What software, proprietary and otherwise, does the consultant anticipate needing and using for the proposed project? What digital files would be provided to the Tribe or ANV during and upon completion of this project type?

***Subcontracting by Consultant***

What percentage (of the total cost to the Tribe or ANV) of the proposed project does the consultant plan to complete using their own personnel, and what percentage, if any, will be subcontracted?

What prospective subcontractors would the consultant use on the proposed project and for what scope(s) of service(s)?

What experience do these prospective subcontractors have with Tribal or ANV projects?

What firm and staff registrations do these subcontractors maintain?

***References***

Do you have specific Tribal or Alaska Native Village references that we may contact? If so, please provide contact information for each.

***Consultant’s awareness of cultural and other resource protection***

What is the consultant’s understanding of cultural resources management and protection? What experience do they have in this regard?

Same question, but as applied to prospective subcontractors.

What is the consultant’s understanding of cultural confidentiality and protection of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)? What is their experience in these areas?

Same question, but as applied to prospective subcontractors.

***Consultant’s experience with contracting between their firm and a Tribe or an ANV***

Has the consultant reviewed sample contract documents that may have been provided as part of the solicitation for this contract?

Does the consultant have any concerns regarding those documents?

Does the consultant and its subcontractors, if any, have experience with Tribal systems for procurement of environmental services? Please cite specific examples.

Please explain how the firm and its representatives would manage the project and contractual or project management relationships with the Tribe and any other entity designated by the Tribe.

***Consultant’s experience with environmental remediation or clean up project delivery methods***

What project delivery systems does the consultant have experience with, e.g., design-build, CMAR, design-bid-build, etc.?

Which of these is the consultant most comfortable with?

Which of these has the consultants worked with on Tribal or ANV projects that they have done to date?

***DBE and local hiring matters***

What experience does the consultant have with projects on which consultants or subconsultants were required to meet DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise) criteria?

Does the consultant foresee for the proposed project any personnel needs that might be met through hires of Tribal or ANV members?

***Regulatory / governmental framework and related considerations***

What is the consultant’s understanding of the regulatory framework for the proposed project? Provide examples of other Tribal or ANV projects conducted under a similar regulatory framework.

What is the consultant’s understanding of the Tribal or ANV government as it pertains to this project? Any experience in this regard?

Is the consultant prepared to make presentations to Tribal council or other governing Tribal authorities, either as identified in a scope of services, or on an as-needed or as-requested basis?

***Other***

Will the consultant assist with interpretation of results/technical reports?

Will the consultant assist with public outreach, attend community meetings, etc., develop fact sheets/results with layman terms for the public, etc.?

What is the consultant’s experience with the procurement process for specific federal projects such as Superfund, Brownfields, etc. (because different agencies, and even programs, may have different procurement requirements)?

***Evaluating References – Questions for References***

What is the relationship between the reference or reference’s organization and the consultant or consultant’s staff members, and for how long has it existed?

What project(s) has the consultant completed for the reference’s organization, date(s) of start and completion(s), and overall outcome(s)?

Was(were) the project(s) completed on time? Elaborate.

If any occurred, did the owner or consultant initiate changes in schedule?

Was(were) the project(s) brought in on budget? Elaborate.

If any occurred, did the owner or consultant initiate changes in budget?

What challenges, difficulties or otherwise noteworthy conditions existed or were encountered on the project(s)? How did the consultant deal with these conditions?

Would the reference or reference’s organization again hire the consultant? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Is the reference aware of other organizations for whom the consultant has done work? If so, what are those organizations?

Please describe how the consultant’s project manager (PM) led the project.

Please describe how the PM handled difficulties that arose during the course of the project.

If the project(s) was(were) to be done again, what would you have done differently?

Why was this consultant chosen instead of other candidate consultants?

How was this consultant hired? Following an RFP or RFQ process? If not, what process was used?

What other consultants were considered?

Is this consultant still engaged on one or more projects?

What services did the consultant provide on the project(s)?

Does the reference consider the consultant a partner in their success? Why or why not?

How pleased are you with the services provided by the consultant’s staff? Please rank on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best.