

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Forestry
Forest Policy and Management Division

RFP#201611211

Strengthening Wood Markets Project

RFP Coordinator: Donald J. Mansius
Maine Forest Service
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

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From the time this RFP is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding this RFP must be made through the aforementioned RFP Coordinator. No other person / state employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFP. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the bidding process, at the state's discretion.

Deadline for Submitted Questions: 15 December 2016, 5:00 p.m. local time

Proposals Due: 17 January 2017, not later than 2:00 p.m. local time

Submit to:

Division of Purchases
Burton M. Cross Building, 111 Sewall Street, 4th Floor
9 State House Station, Augusta ME 04333-0009

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Public Notice

**State of Maine
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Forestry
Forest Policy and Management Division
Public Notice for RFP#201611211**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Strengthening Wood Markets Project

The State of Maine, Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Forest Policy and Management Division is inviting proposals for projects that will strengthen Maine’s forest products markets. In accordance with state procurement practices, the Department hereby announces the publication of a Request for Proposals (RFP) #201611211 for the purchase of the aforementioned goods and services.

A copy of the RFP can be obtained by contacting the Department’s RFP Coordinator for this project: Donald J. Mansius, Director of Forest Policy and Management. The RFP Coordinator can be reached at the following email address: donald.j.mansius@maine.gov, or mailing address: 22 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333. The Department encourages all interested vendors to obtain a copy of the RFP and submit a competitive proposal.

Proposals must be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Purchases, located at the Burton M. Cross Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, 4th Floor, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009. **Proposals must be submitted by 2:00 pm, local time, on 17 January 2017**, when they will be opened at the Division of Purchases’ aforementioned address. Proposals not received at the Division of Purchases’ aforementioned address by the aforementioned deadline will not be considered for contract award.

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Forestry

Forest Policy and Management Division

RFP#201611211

Strengthening Wood Markets Project

PART I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose and Background

The State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (“Department”) invites proposals for projects that will strengthen Maine’s forest products markets, as defined in this Request for Proposals (RFP) document. This document provides instructions for submitting proposals, the procedure and criteria by which the Provider(s) will be selected, and the contractual terms which will govern the relationship between the State of Maine (“State”) and the awarded Bidder.

Maine’s forest products industry cluster is among the most diverse in the nation. The cluster’s wood needs are supplied largely by a land base that is 95% privately owned. Maine is a leading producer of a wide variety of forest products, including but not limited to wood used in various forms to produce electrical and thermal energy. The available wood supply continues to increase, particularly in southern Maine. However, recent contractions in the paper industry have created opportunities for additional wood-using enterprises. Sustaining forest products markets through innovation and expansion is a critical requirement for keeping forests in active management and supporting the state’s and New England economy through direct, indirect, and induced activity. The Department seeks a qualified party that will help the Department: (1) understand the forest inventory, growth, and drain situation in Maine and surrounding states and provinces; (2) understand wood flows within Maine and between Maine, surrounding states and provinces, and other countries; (3) know the processing capacities of Maine mills and those within export distance; (4) track prices of key forest products; (5) develop strong working relationships with key associations, industry leaders, and state and federal agencies; (6) promote Maine’s forest resource assets; and, (7) understand emerging markets and those that are declining.

B. General Provisions

1. Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Department to issue an award or to pay expenses incurred by a Bidder in the preparation of a response to this RFP. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings and software or system demonstrations, where applicable.
2. All proposals should adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in this RFP and all written supplements and amendments (such as the Summary of Questions and Answers), issued by the Department. Proposals are to follow the format and respond to all questions and instructions specified below in the “Proposal Submission Requirements and Evaluation” section of this RFP.

3. Bidders shall take careful note that in evaluating a proposal submitted in response to this RFP, the Department will consider materials provided in the proposal, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal departmental information of previous contract history with the Bidder (if any). The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating a Bidder's experience and capabilities. The proposal shall be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Bidder and shall contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
4. The RFP and the selected Bidder's proposal, including all appendices or attachments, shall be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
5. Following announcement of an award decision, all submissions in response to this RFP will be considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) (1 M.R.S. §401 et seq.).
6. The Department, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in proposals received in response to this RFP.
7. The State of Maine Division of Purchases reserves the right to authorize other departments to use the contract(s) resulting from this RFP, if it is deemed to be beneficial for the State to do so.
8. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, shall be included by this reference. It shall be Proposer's/Vendor's responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.

C. Eligibility to Submit Bids

Public agencies, private for-profit companies, and non-profit companies and institutions are invited to submit bids in response to this Request for Proposals.

D. Contract Term

The Department seeks a cost-efficient proposal to provide services, as defined in this RFP, for the anticipated contract period defined in the table below. Please note that the dates below are estimated and may be adjusted as necessary in order to comply with all procedural requirements associated with this RFP and the contracting process. The actual contract start date will be established by a completed and approved contract.

Contract Renewal: Following the initial term of the contract, the Department may opt to renew the contract for two (2) renewal periods of one year each, subject to continued availability of funding and satisfactory performance.

The term of the anticipated contract, resulting from this RFP, is defined as follows:

Period	Start Date	End Date
Initial Period of Performance	01 March 2017	28 February 2018
Renewal Period #1	01 March 2018	28 February 2019
Renewal Period #2	01 March 2019	28 February 2020

E. Number of Awards

The Department will administer award funds to align with fund availability, as reflected in the table below.

Funding Source	Estimated Date Available	Estimated Amount Available
Initial Period of Performance	01 March 2017	\$70,000
Renewal Period #1	01 March 2018	\$70,000
Renewal Period #2	01 March 2019	\$70,000

The Department expects the contract award to be in the range of \$50,000 to \$70,000 annually. The Department expects to award one (1) contract, in the best interests of the state, as a result of this RFP process. A contract awarded to a grantee is considered a sub-award of federal funds. Federal terms and conditions for sub-awards apply to these grants.

PART II. SCOPE OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

A. Project Overview

The Department invites proposals for projects that will help the Department: understand the forest inventory, growth, and drain situation in Maine and surrounding states and provinces; understand wood flows within Maine and between Maine, surrounding states and provinces, and other countries; know the processing capacities of Maine mills and those within export distance; track prices of key forest products; develop strong working relationships with key associations, industry leaders, and state and federal agencies; promote Maine's forest resource assets; and, understand emerging markets and those that are declining.

B. Key Elements

Maine's forest based economy is at a critical turning point. Although closures of wood processing facilities have affected all states over the last two decades, until recently, Maine has been able to weather industry downturns, and even the loss of some sectors of the forest products cluster (e.g. wood-turning mills). As mills have closed, remaining facilities have been able to absorb the redirected wood flow and support the maintenance of fairly stable harvest levels. Unfortunately, the loss of three large pulp and paper mills in 2014 and 2015, coupled with production cuts at two other mills has tipped the scale. At the same time, biomass to energy markets have declined due to factors that include, but are not limited to, energy policy changes in neighboring states and cheap natural gas.

As mills closed in neighboring states and provinces, Maine's forest products industry became, in effect, the "last man standing." Now, for the first time in at least 30 years, Maine's woodland owners and managers do not have markets for every tree they harvest. This situation affects woodland owners and managers in other states (primarily New England and New York) and neighboring provinces as well, as they have long looked to Maine as a market for low-grade wood.

Notwithstanding the many challenges facing Maine's forest products industry, Maine also has numerous competitive advantages that position it to recapture a leading role in forest products processing, including but not limited to:

- A healthy, growing forest resource that can supply the raw material for a variety of products and markets;
- A diverse forest industry "cluster" made up of firms that produce a wide variety of products from a variety of materials;
- A motivated, well-trained workforce;
- A strong current use taxation program that supports long-term ownership and management of forest land;
- Proximity to the largest markets for wood and wood products in the world -- the markets that exist along the eastern seaboard of the U.S.;
- The logging infrastructure to support diverse markets;
- One of the most resilient forest ecosystems in the world;

- Outstanding wood product research and development capacity, including but not limited to, the capacity present at the University of Maine in Orono;
- Easy access to several ports, including the closest U.S. port to Europe;
- Rail access to neighboring states and provinces;
- A large private road network; and,
- An interstate highway that traverses the state, with several well-constructed feeder roads.

These competitive advantages position Maine well to continue as one of the foremost producers of wood products in the northeast.

The goal of this project is to establish a point person for the Department who will have the important task of identifying – and implementing – innovative approaches to strengthen, expand, and sustain Maine’s forest products industry. The Department expects the successful bidder to act as the recognized “go-to person” on forest products markets issues. The successful bidder will be expected to: understand the forest inventory, growth, and drain situation in Maine and surrounding states and provinces; understand wood flows within Maine and between Maine, surrounding states and provinces, and other countries; know the processing capacities of Maine mills and those within export distance; track prices of key forest products; develop strong working relationships with key associations and industry leaders; promote Maine’s forest resource assets; and, understand emerging markets and those that are declining.

C. Project Outcomes

Existing wood-using industries and potentially new ones will be supported by the establishment of a point person for the development and redevelopment of Maine’s forest products industry. Collaboration between state government and the forest products industry will be strengthened. A successful project would result in the following outcomes, at minimum:

1. Publication of a “What Maine has to Offer” guide to send to potential investors in new or expanding markets.
2. Markets for a wide variety of forest products will be maintained or improved. New markets will be identified and cultivated.
3. The existence of good markets will support active forest management and job creation, particularly in rural communities.
4. Bottlenecks for stimulating investment and reinvestment in Maine’s forest products sector will be identified and addressed.
5. Detailed information on the current health of individual forest products industry sectors will be updated quarterly.
6. Information on challenges and opportunities faced by the forest products industry will be provided to resource managers and policy makers to assist in the development of management options and public policy.

PART III. KEY RFP EVENTS

A. Timeline of Key RFP Events

Event Name	Event Date and Time
Due Date for Receipt of Written Questions	15 December 2016 at 5:00pm, local time
Due Date for Receipt of Proposals	17 January 2017 at 2:00pm, local time
Estimated Contract Start Date (subject to change)	01 March 2017

B. Questions

1. General Instructions

- a. It is the responsibility of each Bidder to examine the entire RFP and to seek clarification in writing if the Bidder does not understand any information or instructions.
- b. Questions regarding the RFP must be submitted in writing and received by the RFP Coordinator listed on the cover page of this RFP document as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified in the timeline above.
- c. Questions may be submitted by e-mail, and include the RFP Number and Title in the subject line. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.
- d. Include a heading with the RFP Number and Title. Be sure to refer to the page number and paragraph within this RFP relevant to the question presented for clarification, if applicable.

- 2. **Summary of Questions and Answers:** Responses to all substantive and relevant questions will be compiled in writing and distributed to all registered, interested persons by e-mail no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the proposal due date. Only those answers issued in writing by the RFP Coordinator will be considered binding. The Department reserves the right to answer or not answer any question received.

C. Submitting the Proposal

- 1. **Proposals Due:** Proposals must be received no later than 2:00 p.m. local time, on the date listed in the timeline above, at which point they will be opened. Proposals received after the 2:00 p.m. deadline will be rejected without exception.
- 2. **Mailing/Delivery Instructions:** PLEASE NOTE: The proposals are not to be submitted to the RFP Coordinator at the requesting Department. The official delivery site is the State of Maine Division of Purchases (address shown below).
 - a. Only proposals received at the official delivery site prior to the stated deadline will be considered. Bidders submitting proposals are responsible for allowing adequate time for delivery. Proposals received after the 2:00 p.m. deadline will be rejected without exception. Postmarks do not count and fax or electronic mail transmissions of proposals are not permitted unless expressly stated in this RFP. Any method of hardcopy delivery is acceptable, such as US Mail, in-person delivery by Bidder, or use of private courier services.

- b. The Bidder must send its proposal in a sealed package including **one (1) original and four (4) copies** of the complete proposal. Please clearly label the original. One electronic copy of the proposal must also be provided on CD or flash drive with the complete narrative and attachments in MS Word format. Any attachments that cannot be submitted in MS Word format may be submitted as Adobe (.pdf) files.
- c. Address each package as follows (and be sure to include the Bidder's full business name and address as well as the RFP number and title):

Bidder Name/Return Address

Division of Purchases
Burton M. Cross Building, 4th Floor
111 Sewall Street
9 State House Station
Augusta ME 04333-0009

Re: RFP#201611211 Strengthening Wood Markets Project

PART IV. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

This section contains instructions for Bidders to use in preparing their proposals. The Bidder's proposal must follow the outline used below, including the numbering and section and sub-section headings as they appear here. The Department seeks detailed yet succinct responses that demonstrate the Bidder's experience and ability to perform the requirements specified throughout this document.

A. Proposal Format

1. For clarity, the proposal should be typed or printed. Proposals should be single-spaced with 1" margins on white 8 1/2" x 11" paper using a font no smaller than 12 point Times New Roman or similar.
2. All pages should be numbered consecutively beginning with number 1 on the first page of the narrative (this does not include the cover page or table of contents pages) through to the end, including all forms and attachments. For clarity, the Bidder's name should appear on every page, including Attachments. Each Attachment must reference the section or subsection number to which it corresponds.
3. Bidders are asked to be brief and to respond to each question and instruction listed in the "Proposal Submission Requirements" section of this RFP. Number each response in the proposal to correspond to the relevant question or instruction of the RFP. The proposal should be limited to a maximum total of eight (8) pages. Pages provided beyond the aforementioned maximum amount will not be considered during evaluation.
4. The following proposal elements, if applicable/requested, will not be counted as part of the maximum total number of pages allowed for the proposal: proposal cover page, table of contents, financial forms, any required attachments, appendices, or forms provided by the Department in the RFP, organizational charts, job descriptions, or staff résumés.
5. Include any forms provided in the application package or reproduce those forms as closely as possible. All information should be presented in the same order and format as described in the RFP.
6. It is the responsibility of the Bidder to provide all information requested in the RFP package at the time of submission. Failure to provide information requested in this RFP may, at the discretion of the Department's evaluation review team, result in a lower rating for the incomplete sections and may result in the proposal being disqualified for consideration.
7. Bidders should complete and submit the proposal cover page provided in Appendix A of this RFP and provide it with the Bidder's proposal. The cover page must be the first page of the proposal package. It is important that the cover page show the specific information requested, including Bidder address(es) and other details listed. The proposal cover page shall be dated and signed by a person authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the Bidder.

B. Proposal Contents

Section I Organization Qualifications and Experience

1. Overview of the Organization

Present a brief statement of qualifications and short summary of relevant experience. If subcontractors are to be used, provide a list that specifies the name, address, phone number, contact person, and a brief description of the subcontractors' organizational capacity and qualifications.

2. Organization Location and Licensure

- a. Location of the corporate headquarters. Also, describe the current or proposed location where services will be provided or from which the contract will be managed.
- b. Attach a certificate of insurance on a standard ACORD form (or the equivalent) evidencing the Bidder's general liability, professional liability and any other relevant liability insurance policies that might be associated with this contract.

3. Organizational Experience

Briefly describe the history of the Bidder's organization, especially regarding skills pertinent to the specific work required by the RFP and any special or unique characteristics of the organization which would make it especially qualified to perform the required work activities. Include similar information for any subcontractors.

4. Description of Experience with Similar Projects

Provide a description of three (3) projects that occurred within the past five years which reflect experience and expertise needed in performing the functions described in the "Scope of Services" portion of this RFP.

Section II Proposed Services

1. Services to be Provided

Discuss the Scope of Services referenced above in Part II of this RFP and what the Bidder will offer. Give particular attention to describing the methods and resources you will use and how you will accomplish the tasks involved. If subcontractors are involved, clearly identify the work each will perform.

2. Implementation - Work Plan

Provide a realistic work plan for the implementation of the project. Display the work plan in a timeline chart. Concisely describe the project development and implementation task, the month(s) it will be carried out and the person or position responsible for each task. If applicable, make note of all tasks to be delegated to subcontractors.

Section III Cost Proposal

General Instructions

- a. The Bidder must submit a cost proposal that covers the entire period of the contract, including any optional renewal periods. Please use the expected contract start date of 03/01/2017 and an end date of 02/28/2018 in preparing this section.

- b. The cost proposal shall include the costs necessary for the Bidder to fully comply with the contract terms and conditions and RFP requirements.
- c. Failure to provide the requested information may result in the exclusion of the proposal from consideration, at the discretion of the Department.
- d. No costs related to the preparation of the proposal for this RFP or to the negotiation of the contract with the Department may be included in the proposal. Only costs to be incurred after the contract effective date that are specifically related to the implementation or operation of contracted services may be included.

Section IV Required Proposal Attachments

Résumés of key project staff must be presented with the Bidders' proposals.

PART V. PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Evaluation of the submitted proposals will be accomplished as follows:

A. Evaluation Process - General Information

1. An evaluation team, comprised of qualified reviewers, will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFP, and in accordance with the most advantageous cost and economic impact considerations (where applicable) for the State.
2. Officials responsible for making decisions on the selection of a contractor shall ensure that the selection process accords equal opportunity and appropriate consideration to all who are capable of meeting the specifications. The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the proposals and to ensure that the contract is awarded to the Bidder whose proposal best satisfies the criteria of the RFP at a reasonable/competitive cost.
3. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Bidders if needed to obtain clarification of information contained in the proposals received, and the Department may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications and/or interviews/presentations. Interviews/presentations are not required, and changes to proposals will not be permitted during any interview/presentation process. Therefore, Bidders should submit proposals that present their costs and other requested information as clearly and completely as possible.

B. Scoring Weights and Process

1. **Scoring Weights:** The score will be based on a 100 point scale and will measure the degree to which each proposal meets the following criteria.

Section I. Organization Qualifications and Experience (25 points)

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, B. Section I.

Section II. Specifications of Work to be Performed (50 points)

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, B. Section II.

Some examples of criteria on which the proposals will be evaluated and scored are:

- a. Demonstrated understanding of Maine's and the region's forest economy;
- b. Demonstrated ability to access, synthesize, and report on forest inventory, forest markets, and forest economic information;
- c. Demonstrated knowledge of and access to forest industry leaders; and,
- d. Demonstrated quality and consistency of communication with clients.

Section III. Cost Proposal (25 points)

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, B. Section III.

2. **Scoring Process:** The review team will use a consensus approach to evaluate the bids. Members of the review team will not score the proposals individually but instead will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points on each category of each proposal. The contract award will be made to the Bidder receiving the highest number of evaluation points, based upon the proposals' satisfaction of the criteria

established in the RFP.

Regarding the proposed funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a *good return for the investment* (money, time) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks & budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes, along with the amount and quality of proposed matching funds or services.

No Best and Final Offers: The State of Maine will not seek a best and final offer (BAFO) from any Bidder in this procurement process. All Bidders are expected to provide their best value pricing with the submission of their proposal.

3. **Negotiations**: The Department reserves the right to negotiate with the successful Bidder to finalize a contract at the same rate or cost of service as presented in the selected proposal. Such negotiations may not significantly vary the content, nature or requirements of the proposal or the Department's Request for Proposals to an extent that may affect the price of goods or services requested. The Department reserves the right to terminate contract negotiations with a selected respondent who submits a proposed contract significantly different from the proposal they submitted in response to the advertised RFP. In the event that an acceptable contract cannot be negotiated with the highest ranked Bidder, the Department may withdraw its award and negotiate with the next-highest ranked Bidder, and so on, until an acceptable contract has been finalized. Alternatively, the Department may cancel the RFP, at its sole discretion.

C. Selection and Award

1. The final decision regarding the award of the contract will be made by representatives of the Department subject to approval by the State Purchases Review Committee.
2. Notification of contractor selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
3. Issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel or any other costs incurred by the Bidder.
4. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or to make multiple awards.

D. Appeal of Contract Awards

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from this RFP may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 M.R.S. §1825-E and 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, Chapter 120 (found here: <http://www.maine.gov/purchases/policies/120.shtml>). The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

PART VI. CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION AND CONDITIONS

A. Contract Document

1. The successful Bidder will be required to execute a contract in the form of a State of Maine Agreement to Purchase Services (BP54). A list of applicable Riders is as follows:

Rider A: Specification of Work to be Performed

Rider B: Method of Payment and Other Provisions

Rider C: Exceptions to Rider B

Rider G: Identification of Country in Which Contracted Work Will Be Performed

The complete set of standard BP54 contract documents may be found on the Division of Purchases website at the following

link: <http://www.maine.gov/purchases/info/forms/BP54.doc>

Other forms and contract documents commonly used by the State can be found on the Division of Purchases website at the following

link: <http://www.maine.gov/purchases/info/forms.html>

Additional forms required:

- a. FFATA reporting: <https://www.fsrs.gov/>
- b. Suspension and Debarment (See Appendix A)
- c. Compliance with 2CFR200:

http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl

2. Allocation of funds is final upon successful negotiation and execution of the contract, subject to the review and approval of the State Purchases Review Committee. Contracts are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Purchases Review Committee and funds are encumbered. No contract will be approved based on an RFP which has an effective date less than fourteen (14) calendar days after award notification to Bidders. (Referenced in the regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Chapter 110, §3(B)(i):

<http://www.maine.gov/purchases/policies/110.shtml>

This provision means that a contract cannot be effective until at least 14 days after award notification.

3. The Department estimates having a contract in place by 01 March, 2017. The State recognizes, however, that the actual contract effective date depends upon completion of the RFP process, date of formal award notification, length of contract negotiation, and preparation and approval by the State Purchases Review Committee. Any appeals to the Department's award decision(s) may further postpone the actual contract effective date, depending upon the outcome. The contract effective date may need to be adjusted, if necessary, to comply with mandated requirements.
4. In providing services and performing under the contract, the successful Bidder shall act independently and not as an agent of the State of Maine.

B. Standard State Agreement Provisions

1. Agreement Administration

- a. Following the award, an Agreement Administrator from the Department will be appointed to assist with the development and administration of the contract and to act as administrator during the entire contract period. Department staff will be available after the award to consult with the successful Bidder in the finalization of the contract.
- b. In the event that an acceptable contract cannot be negotiated with the highest ranked Bidder, the Department may withdraw its award and negotiate with the next-highest ranked Bidder, and so on, until an acceptable contract has been finalized. Alternatively, the Department may cancel the RFP, at its sole discretion.

2. Payments and Other Provisions

The state anticipates paying the Contractor on the basis of net 30 payment terms, upon the receipt of an accurate and acceptable invoice. An invoice will be considered accurate and acceptable if it contains a reference to the State of Maine contract number, contains correct pricing information relative to the contract, and provides any required supporting documents, as applicable, and any other specific and agreed-upon requirements listed within the contract that results from this RFP. This is a reimbursement based grant, based on adequate documentation and proof of payment.

PART VII. LIST OF RFP APPENDICES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

1. Appendix A – State of Maine Proposal Cover Page
2. Appendix B – Cost Proposal Form
3. Appendix C – Original grant proposal submitted to USDA Forest Service

FFATA reporting

<https://www.fsrs.gov/>

Compliance with 2CFR200

http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl

PART VIII. APPENDICES

Appendix A

**State of Maine
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Forestry**

Forest Policy and Management Division

PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

RFP#201611211

Strengthening Wood Markets Project

Bidder's Organization Name:		
Chief Executive - Name/Title:		
Tel:	Fax:	E-mail:
Headquarters Street Address:		
Headquarters City/State/Zip:		
<i>(provide information requested below if different from above)</i>		
Lead Point of Contact for Proposal - Name/Title:		
Tel:	Fax:	E-mail:
Street Address:		
City/State/Zip:		
*DUNS Number:		

*Required

Total Proposed Cost:	\$	
<i>The proposed cost listed above is for reference purposes only, not evaluation purposes. In the event that the cost noted above does not match the Bidder's detailed cost proposal documents, then the information on the cost proposal documents will take precedence.</i>		

- This proposal and the pricing structure contained herein will remain firm for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
- No personnel currently employed by the Department or any other State agency participated, either directly or indirectly, in any activities relating to the preparation of the Bidder's proposal.
- No attempt has been made or will be made by the Bidder to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal.
- The undersigned is authorized to enter into contractual obligations on behalf of the above-named organization.

Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification

By signing this document I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the aforementioned organization, its principals, and any subcontractors named in this proposal:

- a. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, and declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from bidding or working on contracts issued by any governmental agency.*
- b. Have not within three years of submitting the proposal for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:*
 - i. fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state or local government transaction or contract.*
 - ii. violating Federal or State antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;*
 - iii. are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or Local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification; and*
 - iv. have not within a three (3) year period preceding this proposal had one or more federal, state or local government transactions terminated for cause or default.*
- c. Have not entered into a prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a response for the same materials, supplies, equipment, or services and this proposal is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. The above mentioned entities understand and agree that collusive bidding is a violation of state and federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards.*

Failure to provide this certification may result in the disqualification of the Bidder's proposal, at the discretion of the Department.

To the best of my knowledge all information provided in the enclosed proposal, both programmatic and financial, is complete and accurate at the time of submission.

Name:	Title:
Authorized Signature:	Date:

Appendix B

State of Maine
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Forestry
Forest Policy and Management Division
COST PROPOSAL FORM
RFP#201611211
Strengthening Wood Markets Project

Bidder's Organization Name: _____

Instructions: Bidders to provide a detailed budget as outlined below. Bidders should also provide a budget narrative that clearly indicates detailed costs, rates, hours, etc. of each budget line item.

ITEM	DETAILED PROPOSED COST
PERSONNEL:	
Subtotal	
FRINGE BENEFITS:	
Subtotal	
TRAVEL:	
Subtotal	
EQUIPMENT	
Subtotal	
SUPPLIES	
Subtotal	
SUB-CONTRACTUAL	
Subtotal	
OTHER (SPECIFY)	
Subtotal	
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	
INDIRECT COSTS (not to exceed 15%)	
TOTAL PROPOSED COST	\$

Appendix C – Original grant proposal submitted to USDA Forest Service (abridged)

Wood Innovations Project Application - Part 2: Narrative Proposal and Program of Work

Application Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2016

A. **Project Title:** Strengthening and Expanding Maine Wood Markets

B. **Length of Project:** 3 years

C. **Costs:**

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
USDA Forest Service	\$83,334.00	\$83,333.00	\$83,333.00	\$250,000.00
Maine Forest Service	\$45,019.00	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	\$135,019.00
Total	\$128,343.00	\$128,333.00	\$128,333.00	\$385,019.00

D. **Abstract:**

Maine’s forest products industry cluster is among the most diverse in the nation. The cluster’s wood needs are supplied largely by a land base that is 95% privately owned. Maine is a leading producer of a wide variety of forest products, including but not limited to wood used in various forms to produce electrical and thermal energy. The available wood supply continues to increase, particularly in southern Maine. However, recent contractions in the paper industry have created opportunities for additional wood-using enterprises. Sustaining forest products markets through innovation and expansion is a critical requirement for keeping forests in active management and supporting the state’s and New England economy through direct, indirect, and induced activity. Maine proposes to create a Forest Products Industry Development Specialist position to become the recognized “go-to person” on forest products markets issues. This person will be expected to: understand the forest inventory, growth, and drain situation in Maine and surrounding states and provinces; understand wood flows within Maine and between Maine, surrounding states and provinces, and other countries; know the processing capacities of Maine mills and those within export distance; track prices of key forest products; develop strong working relationships with key associations, industry leaders, and state and federal agencies; promote Maine’s forest resource assets; and, understand emerging markets and those that are declining.

E. **Project Narrative**

- The project narrative should provide a clear description and anticipated impact of the project, including the following where appropriate: 1) magnitude of the impact on markets generating renewable energy or creating non-energy wood products; 2) benefits to National Forest System lands (e.g., tons of biomass removed in

fire-prone areas, air quality improvements, cost savings for forest management, or carbon offsets); 3) source of biomass removed from forested areas broken out by land ownership; and 4) job creation and retention.

A healthy forest economy is critical to the overall health of Maine's economy, particularly in rural areas. Maine's Forest Action Plan stated, "Maine's forest products manufacturing industry is critical to Maine's economic and environmental health. The industry provides not only manufacturing jobs and economic impact throughout the state, but is critical to the maintenance of undeveloped forestland and the many benefits it provides, helps support a traditional way of life in many Maine communities, and serves as an anchor for the state's resource-based economy. Maintaining a robust and diverse forest products industry will provide important economic, environmental, and social benefits to Maine (Innovative Natural Resource Solutions LLC, 2005)." The plan identified several goals related to the forest economy:

- Maintaining the most diverse, robust and economically beneficial forest products industry possible and the jobs that this industry provides;
- Sustaining local economies; and,
- Contributing to meeting Maine's energy needs by reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and high energy costs.

Desired future conditions identified in the plan include: "Maine's future timber supply is of sufficient quantity and quality to support a diverse and economically healthy forest manufacturing sector." The plan also identified a major opportunity as regards the forest products industry: "Diversifying Maine's forest products industry to be a leader in new products such as engineered wood products, biofuels, and those from biorefinery technology. With increases in fossil fuel prices, the opportunity exists to replace traditional sources of fuels and chemical feedstocks with wood and wood wastes."

One of the goals stated in the plan focused specifically on the forest products industry: State Goal/Theme 2: Improving and diversifying markets. The following strategies were identified:

1. Improve the relationship between Maine's forest products industry and state government and other stakeholders, and work toward a common goal of a vibrant, sustainable forest industry in Maine.
2. Provide for a high-level state staff member who has credibility and relationships with all state agencies and is responsible for coordination of efforts to address issues within the forest products manufacturing sector.
3. Provide for a utilization and marketing specialist who can work with family forest owners, loggers, and processing facilities (primarily, but not limited to sawmills) to help each link in the wood processing chain realize the greatest value from their forest products.

The Forest Products Industry Development Specialist position will be well-placed to help Maine implement the first two strategies.

- Describe methods and reasoning for selecting areas of focus (e.g.,

geographic clusters, sector-based clusters, or larger projects to be targeted).

Maine's forest industry has statewide, regional, and international impact. As a net importer of wood, Maine's forest products industry supports the forest economies of many neighboring states and provinces. Even within Maine, wood can travel hundreds of miles from the point of harvest to its final destination for processing. Therefore, this program will have a statewide focus.

F. Program of Work

- Describe statement of need, goals, and objectives.

Maine's forest based economy is at a critical turning point. Although closures of wood processing facilities have affected all states over the last two decades, until recently, Maine has been able to weather industry downturns, and even the loss of some sectors of the forest products cluster (e.g. wood-turning mills). As mills have closed, remaining facilities have been able to absorb the redirected wood flow and support the maintenance of fairly stable harvest levels. Unfortunately, the loss of three large pulp and paper mills in 2014 and 2015, coupled with production cuts at two other mills has tipped the scale. At the same time, biomass to energy markets have declined due to factors that include, but are not limited to, energy policy changes in neighboring states and cheap natural gas.

As mills closed in neighboring states and provinces, Maine's forest products industry became, in effect, the "last man standing." Now, for the first time in at least 30 years, Maine's woodland owners and managers do not have markets for every tree they harvest. This situation affects woodland owners and managers in other states (primarily New England and New York) and neighboring provinces as well, as they have long looked to Maine as a market for low-grade wood.

Notwithstanding the many challenges facing Maine's forest products industry, Maine also has numerous competitive advantages that position it to recapture a leading role in forest products processing, including but not limited to:

- A healthy, growing forest resource that can supply the raw material for a variety of products and markets;
- A diverse forest industry "cluster" made up of firms that produce a wide variety of products from a variety of materials;
- A motivated, well-trained workforce;
- A strong current use taxation program that supports long-term ownership and management of forest land;
- Proximity to the largest markets for wood and wood products in the world - the markets that exist along the eastern seaboard of the U.S.;
- The logging infrastructure to support diverse markets;
- One of the most resilient forest ecosystems in the world;

- Outstanding wood product research and development capacity, including but not limited to, the capacity present at the University of Maine in Orono;
- Easy access to several ports, including the closest U.S. port to Europe;
- Rail access to neighboring states and provinces;
- A large private road network; and,
- An interstate highway that traverses the state, with several well-constructed feeder roads.

These competitive advantages position Maine well to continue as one of the foremost producers of wood products in the northeast.

The goal of this project is to establish a point person in Maine state government who will have the important task of identifying - and implementing - innovative approaches to strengthen, expand, and sustain Maine's forest products industry. We expect the program manager to become the recognized "go-to person" on forest products markets issues. This person will be expected to: understand the forest inventory, growth, and drain situation in Maine and surrounding states and provinces; understand wood flows within Maine and between Maine, surrounding states and provinces, and other countries; know the processing capacities of Maine mills and those within export distance; track prices of key forest products; develop strong working relationships with key associations and industry leaders; promote Maine's forest resource assets; and, understand emerging markets and those that are declining.

- Describe methods to accomplish goals and objectives.

We propose to create a Forest Products Industry Development Specialist position in state government. This position will be the "go-to person" on forest products markets and opportunities. We understand that a single person will not be able to do it all, but having a single point of contact will help raise the profile of the forest products industry in economic development circles and allow for increased coordination of effort.

- Specify project accomplishments and deliverables.

Existing wood-using industries and potentially new ones will be supported by the establishment of a point person for the development and redevelopment of Maine's forest products industry. Collaboration between state government and the forest products industry will be strengthened. The following outcomes are anticipated:

1. Markets for a wide variety of forest products will be maintained or improved. New markets will be identified and cultivated.
2. The existence of good markets will support active forest management and job creation, particularly in rural communities.
3. Bottlenecks for stimulating investment and reinvestment in Maine's forest products sector will be identified and addressed.
4. Detailed information on the current health of individual forest products

industry sectors will be updated quarterly.

5. Information on challenges and opportunities faced by the forest products industry will be provided to resource managers and policy makers to assist in the development of management options and public policy.

- Discuss communication and outreach activities that create social acceptance in communities or markets where projects are targeted.

Where specific activities involve garnering local support, the Forest Products Industry Development Specialist will identify and work with local community leaders to develop and implement a communications and outreach plan.

- Describe the monitoring plan, which must include annual and final reports.

The Forest Products Industry Development Specialist will be expected to check in regularly with MFS and Maine Forest Products Council leadership on progress. In addition to the required annual and final reports, the position will be expected to develop metrics for tracking project progress and provide quarterly reports to MFS leadership.

- Discuss all relevant aspects of the project, such as preliminary assessments, resource inventories, and success stories.

Maine's forest inventory is strong and increasing, particularly in southern Maine. While some market sectors (e.g. sawlogs) currently are reasonably strong, other sectors (e.g. pulp and paper, biomass) are not. This growing imbalance between available forest inventory and domestic processing capacity presents significant opportunities in all sectors of wood-using industries. A focused effort to help existing forest products businesses remain viable and attract new investments in wood-using businesses can help maintain a balance between forest growth and harvest, improve economic conditions in Maine's rural communities, and keep Maine's forests healthy and resilient.

- Describe projected impact on wood energy or wood products markets.

We expect this project to help stem the slide of Maine's forest products industry and, with timely investments of state, private, and federal resources, assist in a turnaround that helps maintain a vibrant, resilient forest products economy.

- **Include a timeline for key activities.**

Project Timeline

Year 1- Months 1-6

- Hire Forest Products Industry Development Specialist
- Develop specific work program; establish industry and economic development contacts.
- Survey forest products business leaders across the state, region, and nation.
- Develop "state of the forest economy" assessment with recommendations to address identified issues and capitalize on opportunities.

- Begin quarterly reports on current health of various sectors of the forest products industry.

- Months 7-12

- Begin to implement recommendations of “state of the forest economy” assessment.
- Continue quarterly reports on current health of various sectors of the forest products industry.
- Annual report

Year 2- Months 1-6

- Continue to implement recommendations of “state of the forest economy” assessment.
- Continue quarterly reports on current health of various sectors of the forest products industry.
- Stakeholder summit.

- Months 7-12

- Publish “What Maine has to Offer” guide.
- Continue to implement recommendations of “state of the forest economy” assessment.
- Continue quarterly reports on current health of various sectors of the forest products industry.
- Annual report

Year 3 - Months 1-6

- Continue to implement recommendations of “state of the forest economy” assessment.
- Continue quarterly reports on current health of various sectors of the forest products industry.
- Begin to develop transition plan for post-grant work.
- Stakeholder summit.

- Months 7-12

- Continue to implement recommendations of “state of the forest economy” assessment.
- Continue quarterly reports on current health of various sectors of the forest products industry.
- Annual report
- Final report

G. Qualifications of Staff, Organization, and Partners (1.5 pages)

- Include key personnel qualifications, certifications, and relevant experience.

□ Donald Mansius will be the lead person for this project. Mr. Mansius currently

is the Director of Forest Policy and Management for the Maine Forest Service, a position he has held for nearly 20 years. His responsibilities include oversight of the Forest Stewardship and Urban and Community Forestry programs (federally funded), water resources management, education, and woodland owner assistance programs, as well as implementation of the state's forest practices regulatory program. He has overseen the successful development and implementation of numerous state and federal initiatives and programs. Mr. Mansius is a licensed forester. He graduated with a B.S.F. (High Honors) from the University of Montana School of Forestry and completed graduate-level study in natural resource economics at Washington State University.

¶ Doug Denico is Director of the Maine Forest Service. Mr. Denico worked in the private sector for nearly 40 years before assuming his current position. He has strong and broad knowledge and understanding of wood markets and marketing. Mr. Denico is a licensed forester. He graduated with a B.S. in Forestry and a M.S. in Forest Economics from the University of Maine.

¶ Peter Beringer is Director of Support Services for the Maine Forest Service. He played a key role in the development and implementation of the \$11.424 million ARRA Wood-To-Energy Project which provided funding and technical assistance for the conversion of 24 projects across the state which displace over 1 million gallons of heating fuel annually. Mr. Beringer is a licensed forester. He graduated with a B.S. in Natural Resources Management from Cook College, Rutgers University and completed graduate level study in a Masters in Forestry program at the University of Maine.

¶ Eric Kingsley is a partner in Innovative Natural Resource Solutions LLC (INRS), a natural resource industries consulting firm with offices in New Hampshire and Maine. Since joining INRS in 2000, he has worked with dozens of parties on the development of new forest industries, and often works to deploy or create unique financial tools to support the industry. These include: (1) partnered to design a way for wood-using industries to provide credit enhancement to their suppliers, thus making new logging equipment more affordable (and securing future volume); (2) initiated a fund to pre-buy environmental attributes from community-scale biomass heating projects, proving capital to get projects built; (3) served as a board member (and president) of an organization that has provided over \$300 million in financing to projects in distressed rural communities nation-wide; and, (4) developed a unique tool for owners and investors of pulp mills and large-scale biomass facilities to manage fuel cost risk. Eric has a Master's Degree in Resource Economics from the University of New Hampshire, and served for five years as executive director of the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association, a trade association representing all sectors of that state's forest industry.

¶ We also intend to involve other private sector forest industry experts.

- Describe experience and success of any prior-funded Forest Service projects.

The Maine Forest Service has a long history of successful performance on USDA Forest Service grants, including the various Cooperative Forestry program

grants. MFS had a great deal of success in supporting forest based businesses through the Rural Development Through Forestry program; however, that program was eliminated from the federal budget quite some time ago. Some specific success stories are highlighted in the following section.

- Describe experience and success of similar projects completed in the past.

Following the 1998 ice storms that paralyzed New England and damaged a substantial amount of southern and central Maine's forests, the USDA Forest Service awarded MFS a \$25+ million grant to assist the state's recovery. With that grant, MFS awarded \$800,000 to the Maine Economic Development District Association to assist forest related businesses in ice storm recovery efforts. Some 38 companies enrolled in the program and received \$777,500 in grants. Most of these companies used the assistance to help them cope with defective materials by increasing recovery efforts, changing manufacturing processes, or introduction of different products with accompanying marketing efforts.

The ice storm recovery grant also supported the Future Forest Economy project (2005). This project was intended to identify what is needed to maintain Maine's existing wood using industries, to identify growth opportunities in existing and potential new wood using industries, and to identify what Maine State Government and the industry itself could do to improve the prospects for Maine's forest products industries. This comprehensive examination of the state's forest economy provided the basis for several policy initiatives that aimed at supporting and sustaining Maine's forest products industry.

Finally, MFS played a lead role in implementing a wood boiler conversion project with federal assistance through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. MFS was awarded \$11.424 million to create or maintain 200 jobs in counties with high unemployment. It accomplished this by promoting and carrying out wood-to-energy (biomass) projects on non-Federal lands. The MFS led efforts to convert the heating systems of at least 17 public buildings to wood exclusively or wood and another fuel.

H. Project Outcomes, Annual Progress Reports, and Final Reports

- List anticipated project outcomes and accomplishments as well as desired results.

Anticipated accomplishments are consistent with the objectives set forth earlier. Existing wood-using industries and potentially new ones will be supported by the establishment of a point person for the development and redevelopment of Maine's forest products industry. Collaboration between state government and the forest products industry will be strengthened. The following outcomes are anticipated:

- Publication of a "What Maine has to Offer" guide to send to potential investors in new or expanding markets.
- Markets for a wide variety of forest products will be maintained or improved. New markets will be identified and cultivated.
- The existence of good markets will support active forest management and job creation, particularly in rural communities.

- Bottlenecks for stimulating investment and reinvestment in Maine’s forest products sector will be identified and addressed.
- Detailed information on the current health of individual forest products industry sectors will be updated quarterly.
- Information on challenges and opportunities faced by the forest products industry will be provided to resource managers and policy makers to assist in the development of management options and public policy.
- Describe the types of reports, documents, and success stories that will be provided at the end of the project for posting on the Wood Education and Resource Center web site.

Annual progress reports are required on a calendar basis. The reports will provide an overview of progress and accomplishments by goals and objectives included in the approved Cooperative Agreement or grant narrative.

A detailed final progress report is required and will include the following items:

- *Final Summary Report: A brief overview of accomplishments by goals and objectives included in the approved Cooperative Agreement narrative.*
- *Final Accomplishment Report: Includes various assessments, reports, case studies, and related documents that resulted from the project’s activities.*
- *Final reports will be added to the WERC Wood Innovations Web site.*

In addition to required reports, the project will generate the following publications:

- A “What Maine has to Offer” guide for potential investors in new or expanding markets;
- A “state of the forest economy” assessment; and,
- Quarterly reports on current health of various sectors of the forest products industry.