



CLEAN AIR *&* CLEAN ENERGY  
ARE GOOD BUSINESS

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**for**  
**GREEN BONDS VERIFICATION SERVICES**

**Date: September 9, 2020**

**OHIO AIR QUALITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**REQUEST FOR GREEN BONDS VERIFICATION SERVICES**

The Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (the Authority) is issuing this Request for Proposals for Green Bonds Verification Services for the Authority's Clean Air Improvement Program (the RFP). If you wish to submit a response to this RFP, please observe the following requirements:

1. The response must provide the information requested (see **Information to be provided**). Responses to the RFP are limited to 20 pages, not including exhibits. The Authority may request more detailed information regarding any proposal submitted.
2. An electronic version of the proposal is due by Noon (EDT) on September 24, 2020. Email to [info@aqda.state.oh.us](mailto:info@aqda.state.oh.us). In addition, one hard copy of your proposal must be delivered to the Authority by September 25, 2020, addressed to Ohio Air Quality Development Authority, 50 W. Broad Street, Suite 1118, Columbus, Ohio 43215, Attn: Sandra Langston.
3. The Authority will entertain written requests for additional information in connection with this RFP, if such requests are received by the Authority by September 15, 2020 by 12:00 pm (EDT). Any such request should be sent by e-mail to [info@aqda.state.oh.us](mailto:info@aqda.state.oh.us).

Any responses to requests for additional information will be sent to all the recipients of this RFP and posted on the Authority's website ([www.ohioairquality.org](http://www.ohioairquality.org)) by the close of business on September 18, 2020. The Authority will respond only to requests seeking specific information regarding the RFP. The Authority will not respond to requests seeking an indication of the Authority's preferences or intentions. In addition, the Authority reserves the discretion to decline to respond to any request.

4. It is the policy of the Authority to provide an equal opportunity to all qualified applicants who respond to the RFP. To achieve this, the Authority will take affirmative steps to administer this process without regard to race, sex or other protected status, and to base all decisions on valid selection criteria. Unlawful discrimination against qualified applicants is strictly prohibited.
5. Responses to the RFP and requests for additional information are property of the Authority and will be considered "public records" subject to disclosure pursuant to the Authority's records policy and Ohio law. Potential respondents are advised that the Authority will not sign non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements.

## THE AUTHORITY

The purpose of the Authority is to provide for the conservation of air as a natural resource of the State of Ohio (the State), and to prevent or abate the pollution thereof, to provide for the comfort, health, safety and general welfare of all employees, as well as all other inhabitants of the State, to assist in the financing of air quality facilities for industry, commerce, distribution and research, including public utility companies, to create or preserve jobs and employment opportunities or improve the economic welfare of the people, or assist and cooperate with governmental agencies in achieving such purposes.

The Constitution of the State, particularly Article VIII, Section 13, and Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3706 are the sources of, and enabling legislation for, the exercise of the powers of the Authority.

The Authority consists of seven members. Five public members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. No more than three members may belong to the same political party. Each member's term of office is eight years. The terms are staggered. The two remaining members serve ex-officio. They are the Director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Director of the Ohio Department of Health.

The Authority elects from its appointed members a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson. The Secretary-Treasurer is elected, but need not be a member of the Authority. The Executive Director serves as the current Secretary-Treasurer and is responsible for daily operations as well as oversight of Authority staff and contractors.

In order to support its statutorily authorized role<sup>1</sup>, OAQDA has been granted the ability to issue debt on behalf of, and certify tax exemptions for, projects that meet the requirements of an Air Quality Facility<sup>2</sup>; as defined within the statute, and qualified through the Clean Air Improvement Program (CAIP) Guidelines. Financing requirements are defined in the Guidelines for Bond Issuance. OAQDA is adding a Green Bonds Framework to its portfolio of tools that document the Authority's commitment to facilitating the development, financing and ongoing success of Air Quality Facilities statewide. A draft of the Green Bonds Framework is attached to this RFP as Exhibit A. The CAIP Guidelines, which include the Guidelines for Bond Issuance as Appendix B, are attached to this RFP as Exhibit B.

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<sup>1</sup> Reference to full statute See Chapter 3706 of the Ohio Revised Code.

<sup>2</sup> Insert statute section with definition See Section 3706.01(G).

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The Verifier's scope of services includes the following:

- A. Full verification of the Green Bonds Framework as compliant with the Green Bond Principles.
- B. Coordination, as necessary, with the financing team to ensure that the Standard-required information concerning the Green Bonds Framework is accurately and completely transmitted and included in the Second Party Opinion of the Framework.
- C. Preparation of a Second Party Opinion for the Authority to be included in pre-issuance and post-issuance disclosure documents
- D. Be available for any Board and staff meetings, as necessary.

## **PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

The Authority intends to use the following schedule of events for the solicitation, selection and award of technical support services:

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Description of Event</u></b>
September 9, 2020	RFP Released
September 15, 2020	Deadline to submit requests for additional information
September 18, 2020	Deadline for the Authority to respond to requests for additional information
September 24, 2020	Deadline for proposals to be submitted
Week of September 28, 2020	Possible interviews with entities submitting proposals
October 15, 2020	Notification of selection of Verification Agent
November 10, 2020	Authority Board consideration of Verification Agent contract
December 18, 2020	Final Framework and Second Party Opinion Delivered
January 12, 2021	Authority Board consideration of Framework and SPO for release

## **INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED**

1. A proposed fee schedule (billable at closing and including all expenses) for the services described above. Any travel that is required must be approved in advance by the Authority.
2. Proposed personnel who will be assigned to this engagement with a brief bio.
3. A summary of your firm's experience for which any of the proposed personnel listed above provided Green Bond verification services for bond issues or for programs similar to the Authority's request. Include a name and phone number for each reference. Please indicate whether your firm has provided these services for a bond issue in the U.S. municipal marketplace.
4. A summary of your firm's experience for which any of the proposed personnel listed above provided verification services for Green Bond Certification for a single issue bond or for a framework.
5. A form of verification report and/or Second Party Opinion that your firm has issued for any transaction or program similar to the one contemplated.
6. Evidence of professional liability insurance.
7. Any existing or potential conflicts(s) of interest arising from relationship with or representation of other parties and if selected, potential conflicts(s) between other parties and the Authority.
8. Any litigation, administrative and/or investigative proceedings regarding a violation or alleged violation by the applicant or the identified individuals of any State or federal law or regulation that is currently pending or concluded since January 1, 2010.
9. Any other relevant factors that should be considered by the Authority.

## **BASE OF SELECTION**

Selection will be based upon, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Articulation of ability to fulfill the scope of work by identifying the areas of expertise as outlined in the Scope of Services (identified from A – D); and
- (b) Qualifications, education and experience of the individuals assigned to perform services; and
- (c) Cost; each proposal should include specific compensation amount, with the understanding that the payment amounts and schedules will be negotiated with the successful proposer(s) and during each project assignment; and
- (d) Organizational history, structure, insurance policies, and ability to certify regarding conflicts of interests; and
- (e) References

The Authority reserves the right to accept or reject in whole or in part—without incurring liability of any kind—any or all proposals submitted pursuant to this solicitation.

## **OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

In connection with this RFP, the Authority reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to:

1. Rescind or amend this RFP, and distribute the amendments prior to the submittal deadline to any potential respondent known to the Authority to have requested this RFP;
2. Reject any or all proposals;
3. Request an interview with, or request additional information from individuals or organizations prior to selection of the verification agent;
4. Investigate the references and past performance of any respondent with respect to its successful performance of similar services, compliance with specifications and contractual obligations.
5. Select any organization(s) for further negotiations which, in the Authority's judgment, will best meet the Authority's needs;
6. Change the proposed schedule of events;
7. Waive any technicalities and make any award(s) that is determined to be in the Authority's best interests; and
8. Disqualify any response to this RFP if any individual lobbies or attempts to influence any member or staff of the Authority regarding the selection of the technical support consultant.

The Authority assumes no responsibility for any costs incurred by any person or entity in response to this RFP.