

Request for Proposal (RFP) Training on Essential Quality Control Elements

The NELAC Institute (TNI) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to foster the generation of environmental data of known and documented quality through an open, inclusive, and transparent process that is responsive to the needs of the community.

TNI's vision is a true national accreditation program, whereby all entities involved in the generation of environmental measurement data within the United States are accredited to one uniform, rigorous, and robust program that has been implemented consistently nationwide and focuses on the technical competence of the entity pursuing accreditation. TNI believes such a program will improve the quality and reliability of environmental data used by federal and state agencies.

TNI's Advocacy Committee is interested in contracting with organizations to provide a webinar(s) related to the 12 quality control requirements promulgated by EPA in the 2012 Method Update Rule (http://water.epa.gov/scitech/methods/cwa/update_index.cfm).

BACKGROUND

EPA has promulgated a new section 136.7 that specifies 12 “essential” quality control procedures that must be used when conducting an analysis with an approved method or when insufficient instructions are contained in an approved method.

- (1) Demonstration of Capability (DOC);
- (2) Method Detection Limit (MDL);
- (3) Laboratory reagent blank (LRB), also referred to as method blank (MB);
- (4) Laboratory fortified blank (LFB), also referred to as a spiked blank, or laboratory control sample (LCS);
- (5) Matrix spike (MS) and matrix spike duplicate (MSD), or laboratory fortified matrix (LFM) and LFM duplicate, may be used for suspected matrix interference problems to assess precision;
- (6) Internal standards (for GC/MS analyses), surrogate standards (for organic analysis) or tracers (for radiochemistry);
- (7) Calibration (initial and continuing), also referred to as initial calibration verification (ICV) and continuing calibration verification (CCV);
- (8) Control charts (or other trend analyses of quality control results);
- (9) Corrective action (root cause analysis);
- (10) QC acceptance criteria;
- (11) Definitions of preparation and analytical batches that may drive QC frequencies; and
- (12) Minimum frequency for conducting all QC elements.

EPA indicated analysts could refer to and follow the QC published in “equivalent” methods or the QC published in Standard Methods, or in the laboratory's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). EPA further indicated specific controls may not apply (e.g., surrogate standards do not apply to analyses of inorganic parameters).

TNI is concerned that the vague nature of the language in Section 136.7 will lead to confusion among the laboratory community. TNI believes the 2009 TNI Standard for the accreditation of environmental laboratories can provide the detailed guidance that is needed to comply with this new requirement in a cost-effective manner. TNI also believes this training will further the acceptance of the TNI standard as a national standard.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Scope of Work consists of providing on-line training on how to use the TNI standard to comply with Part 136.7. TNI envisions a series of webinars that address one or more of these 12 requirements. Proposers can decide to propose to provide training on one or more of these elements.

FURNISHED EQUIPMENT, PROPERTY, OR INFORMATION

The following items will be provided by TNI:

- Course announcement posted on TNI website.
- Set-up of webinar - including invitations and uploaded documents.
- Link to webcast training for trainer and provide one-on-one training on use of Webinar tools.
- E-mail reminders and after meeting thank-you based on Webinar Application.
- Assistance with webinar features and tools during actual training.
- On-line end of course survey for attendees.
- Results of end of course survey for trainer.
- URL for attendees to sign-up for course.
- Collection of course fees.
- A list of course registrations 1 week prior to course. Resent day before course.
- Training Certificates.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Contractor shall retain all intellectual property rights for the course materials.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Interested contractors should prepare a formal proposal that briefly discusses how the contractor will achieve TNI's training objectives. The proposal should also include the following elements:

- A summary of how the training course will be organized and presented;
- A summary of the contractor's understanding of the language in Section 136.7
- A summary of the contractor's general and specific experience including experience developing and presenting training courses; and
- A detailed cost proposal that satisfies the requirements specified in the pricing section below.

The proposal should not exceed 10 pages in length.

PROPOSAL DUE DATE

Proposals must be received at TNI by midnight, EDT June 1, 2012. Proposals shall be submitted by email to Ilona Taunton at ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org.

SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS

Bidders may direct questions regarding this solicitation to Ilona Taunton no later than 1:00 p.m. EDT,

May 30, 2012. Questions shall be submitted by email. Questions and answers that affect the bidding process will be made available to all organizations that have indicated they are planning to respond no later than 5:00 EDT, May 31, 2012. Since this is the only means that will be used to provide responses to questions or to amend the solicitation, applicants should inform TNI if they plan to provide a proposal.

PRICE

Nothing herein shall be construed to commit TNI to pay any costs incurred by bidders in connection with preparation of a proposal, or to guarantee the procurement of any services. All prices are to be in U.S. dollars. Contractor shall furnish and provide all material, labor, supervision, equipment, and incidentals required for accomplishing the work covered by the Contract, except the work, materials, services, or equipment to be furnished by TNI.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

TNI will review all proposals that are received by the deadline in accordance with the following criteria:

- Relevance of proposal to TNI's objectives and priorities;
- Technical merit;
- Competency of the proposed staff;
- Feasibility of the proposal;
- Adequacy of the applicant's resources; and
- Cost.

The anticipated award date for this contract is June 8, 2012.

PAYMENT TERMS

Payment will be made on a monthly basis based on a series of webinars. Payment will be made by the 15th of the month following the month in which the webinar(s) occurred.

EXCEPTIONS, EXCLUSIONS, OR SPECIAL CONDITIONS

This solicitation permits the bidder to impose exceptions, exclusions, or special conditions. However, the bidder is hereby advised that any such exception, exclusion, or special condition may render your proposal non-responsive, which would preclude an award to you. Any exception, exclusion, or special condition the bidder wishes to include or impose must be fully and completely described in a written attachment to the Bidder's proposal.