

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**  
**FOR**  
**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE INTERSTATE TURBINE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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**RFQ SUMMARY**

The Clean Energy States Alliance Interstate Turbine Advisory Council, LLC (“ITAC”) is establishing a unified list of small and mid-sized wind energy systems that meet the performance, reliability, acoustic, and warranty service expectations of incentive providers. This RFQ seeks to identify a pool of qualified technical assistance contractors (“Contractors”) to assist with the evaluation of wind turbine systems for inclusion on this list. Contractors selected through this RFQ may be requested to evaluate wind energy system designs, performance, test results and certification, research wind turbine operational and warranty service history, and provide other technical assistance services for ITAC. Contractors will be selected for the pool based on their submission to this RFQ. It is anticipated that multiple consultants may be selected for the pool.

**OVERVIEW OF ITAC**

ITAC is a Vermont limited liability corporation managed by Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA), a not-for-profit corporation created with the purpose of significantly expanding the joint work of the non-federal renewable energy funds and programs.

ITAC is a participant driven organization, created to advance the goals of the participating wind incentive programs. Participation is open to clean energy programs, utilities and other entities that offer incentives or other financial support for small and mid-scale wind projects. Private businesses, industry associations and advocacy groups are not eligible to participate.

Participants of ITAC are authorized to use ITAC’s list of wind turbines as the basis for incentive eligibility in their respective programs. In addition, participants engage in regular information-sharing calls and webinars, engage in the listserv, and have access to the rapidly growing library of wind turbine and manufacturer information. Together, participants establish the criteria for turbines listed with ITAC, review materials about wind turbines under consideration, consider recommendations from technical experts, and make final determinations of eligibility.

ITAC is a self-funded enterprise. ITAC participants contribute to the costs of administering the organization and engaging technical assistance contractors to support wind turbine evaluation.

The mission of ITAC is:

- To establish a collaborative group of public clean energy programs to evaluate and identify small and mid-sized wind turbines that fit the performance and durability expectations of incentive providers.

- Take advantage of the research and collective expertise with wind energy systems of the participating organizations.
- To pool resources to efficiently engage qualified experts to assist with technical review.
- To create a unified list of wind energy turbines that would potentially be eligible for participating state incentive programs.

## **BACKGROUND**

Currently, several public clean energy programs, including those in New York, Wisconsin, Oregon, California, and others, maintain lists of wind turbines that are eligible for funding through their incentive programs. The purpose of these lists is to ensure that rate- or taxpayer funding is responsibly deployed to support the installation of effective wind technology with a proven record of durability, safety, reasonable acoustic emissions, reliability, good performance, and responsive warranty and customer service. Incentive programs need to ensure that funding is spent on reliable, productive wind turbines that will result in positive customer experiences and help states meet their clean energy goals.

Identifying equipment with these qualities is challenging. It requires not only technical expertise, but broad familiarity with the past and present performance of specific wind turbines. Maintaining a list presents the same challenges, and also requires the capability to stay abreast of system design modifications and issues related to any listed turbines, to ensure they continue to meet expectations.

States that have historically developed and maintained these lists of incentive-eligible wind turbines should be recognized for tackling a difficult but necessary job. Despite these efforts, many of the processes used by states have failed to screen out unsuitable wind turbines due to the challenges described above.

In addition, having multiple, inconsistent state- or program-level lists creates confusion in the marketplace for consumers, policy makers and manufacturers. It is also inefficient. Clean energy programs with eligible wind turbine lists are engaging in duplicative review and assessment efforts, with less than satisfactory results.

In some incentive programs, there are no criteria for wind equipment. Due to the large number of unproven and untested wind products available in the market, lack of equipment criteria typically results in dissatisfied participants, unproductive systems, and system failures. The potential for negative program outcomes or the creation of poor market perceptions is a very real risk.

Overall, there has been a lack of communication and information sharing about distributed wind between clean energy programs because no forum to do so existed. States have not been discussing critical topics like equipment evaluation, program implementation, incentive design, and policy. As a result, programs are isolated, unsuccessful approaches are repeatedly tried, and news of effective practices is slow to spread.

Over the past several years, the small wind industry has come together to set standards for equipment. In 2009, the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) created the Small Wind Turbine Performance and Safety Standard (AWEA 9.1 - 2009). This standard establishes the platform against which products are tested that is then verified by an independent, third-party certification body. Certification is a critical step to increase consumer confidence in small wind technology and provide the consistency that public clean energy programs are seeking. Certification is an invaluable asset for the small wind market. However, it alone does not satisfy all of the needs of incentive programs.

There are multiple certification bodies - the Small Wind Certification Council and Intertek, to name two currently certifying products in the U.S. These entities do not collaborate, leaving incentive programs and consumers yet again facing multiple lists from different agencies. And while certification verifies that a product meets the AWEA 9.1 standard, it is only intended to verify and report the engineering and power performance characteristics of a wind turbine. Initial certification is based on test data from a singular testing experience and does not examine the operational history, consumer and dealer experiences with the manufacturer, the adequacy of the tower, or the duration and quality of the warranty. Any of these elements may have great bearing on a system's suitability for funding through clean energy programs. Recently, incentive programs have felt plagued with technical and non-technical problems, many of which resulted from inadequate product warranties and bad customer and dealer service. Thus, while a certified turbine is better than an uncertified one, certification is no guarantee that a turbine will meet the expectations of incentive providers.

Another limitation of the AWEA standard for clean energy programs is that AWEA 9.1-2009 only applies to small wind turbines. For turbines with rotor swept areas greater than 200 m<sup>2</sup>, there is no appropriate or reasonable standard to apply. The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) has standards for wind turbines, but these were developed for large, utility-scale equipment. The extremely high cost of designing, testing and certifying turbines to all parts of the rigorous IEC standards appears to be out of proportion with the mid-sized market. With the IEC standard setting the bar too high, and AWEA 9.1-2009 applying to only small turbines, these machines fall between the cracks, necessitating that clean energy programs interested in funding turbines of this size conduct independent evaluations.

Many clean energy programs are keen to support projects of this size. Mid-sized wind projects can access better wind speeds due to their taller towers, typically resulting in better overall performance for a lower dollar per MW investment. This makes them an important piece of a cost-effective wind program's portfolio. However, with greater size and production capability comes larger incentives and, in turn, a greater need for scrutiny to ensure the systems will operate reliably for their full life expectancy.

The difficulty of assessing mid-sized turbines is compounded by the fact that few of these mid-sized systems have been installed in the U.S. and clean energy funds have very limited experience to draw from. Their greater complexity and more sophisticated control systems call for the involvement of qualified technical experts in their evaluation. By pooling resources through ITAC, incentive providers large and small can access qualified technical experts to support this work.

In response to the challenges described above, several leading public clean energy funds have worked with the Clean Energy States Alliance to form ITAC: an alliance of clean energy programs and utility incentive providers working jointly to tackle the challenges of the small and midscale wind market. Specifically, ITAC is working to:

- Establish a collaborative group of public clean energy programs to evaluate and identify small and mid-sized wind turbines that fit the performance and durability expectations of incentive providers.
- Take advantage of the research and collective expertise with wind energy systems of the participating organizations.
- Pool resources to efficiently engage qualified experts to assist with technical review.

- Create a unified list of wind energy turbines that would potentially be eligible for participating state incentive programs.

This collaborative effort to create of a unified list of incentive-appropriate wind turbines will address the problems experienced by states with qualified equipment, as well as provide an opportunity to engage incentive programs currently lacking equipment criteria. In time, it will reduce confusion for clean energy programs and their participants, and provide consistency for manufacturers seeking incentives for their products. By pooling resources, the collaboration can cost-effectively engage qualified experts to assist with technical review. Combining the collective experience of the participating clean energy programs with the utilization of qualified technical assistance will dramatically strengthen the evaluation process and, in turn, the list itself.

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### **GOAL OF THE RFQ**

The goal of this RFQ is to select a pool of Contractors to provide technical assistance services to ITAC to ensure that high quality, reliable and safe wind systems are listed on the ITAC unified list of wind turbines and, as a result, funded and installed under the participating ITAC member wind incentive programs.

Contractors may be asked to: evaluate wind energy system designs, performance, test results and certifications; research wind turbine operational and warranty service history; and provide other technical assistance services for ITAC, as outlined in the TASKS section of the RFQ.

### **SERVICES REQUESTED**

The primary task of selected Contractors will be to provide timely assistance to ITAC with the evaluation of specific wind turbines with a rotor swept area greater than 200 m<sup>2</sup>, as needed.<sup>1</sup> This evaluation will cover both technical and non-technical considerations, including, but not limited to:

- engineering and design strengths and weakness
- power performance
- energy generation estimates
- acoustic emissions
- safety
- operation and maintenance requirements
- quality of warranty coverage
- dealer support and training
- testing reports
- domestic and international certification
- accuracy of marketing claims
- operational history
- customer and dealer service history

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<sup>1</sup> For turbines with a rotor swept area of 200m<sup>2</sup> or less, ITAC plans to require certification to the AWEA 9.1-2009 standard as a minimum criteria in 2012. Certification will provide ITAC members with enough 3<sup>rd</sup> party verified information to complete an evaluation without additional technical assistance. While occasional turbines of this size class may warrant the input from a Contractor, this is anticipated to only be in exceptional cases.

This evaluation will not include any actual testing of turbines or any component.

Ultimately, Contractors will be asked to provide ITAC with a recommendation of a turbine's suitability for listing with ITAC.

In addition to evaluating the merits of wind turbines under consideration, Contractors may also be asked to work cooperatively with ITAC to develop minimum requirements for small and mid-sized turbines listed with ITAC, and further refine turbine evaluation criteria.

As needed, Contractors may be asked to provide expertise on other aspects of small and mid-sized turbine technology and market development.

All tasks require the ability to develop a timeline and estimated budget for assigned work, write reports, communicate clearly with multiple stakeholders, and work within specified timeframes.

Work will be assigned to selected Contractors depending on their expertise and ability to provide the necessary services in a cost-effective manner. Selection of a specific Contractor from the pool will be at ITAC's sole discretion.

### **RESPONDENT REQUIREMENTS**

Respondents may be qualified individuals, companies, or teams. Respondents must have demonstrated experience in the review, evaluation or development small or mid-sized wind systems.

Proposers should be familiar with the AWEA 9.1-2009 standard, Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories, accredited and non-accredited independent, third-party certification bodies for wind, IEC 61400 type certifications for wind systems, the sections of IEC 61400 that are appropriate for acoustics, durability, safety, and performance, UL-1741, CE or European Conformity marks, and the other standards and codes relevant to small and mid-sized wind systems in the U.S.

Respondents must demonstrate the ability to provide cost-effective, high-quality, timely services to ITAC, as needed.

### **COMPENSATION**

It is anticipated that Contractors selected through this RFQ will be offered a standard agreement, with a maximum contract amount, for an initial term of one year with options for ITAC to renew for additional one-year periods. Though ITAC anticipates utilizing the funding available for technical assistance, ITAC does not guarantee that any Contractor selected for the pool through this RFQ will actually receive a task assignment or funding.

Work will be assigned by ITAC on an as-needed basis. The process for assigning and compensating Contractors for tasks will typically proceed as follows:

- ITAC identifies a need for technical assistance in evaluating a wind system, notifies the selected Contractor and provides the available documents for Contractor review.
- Contractor prepares a proposal consisting of a brief work plan, an estimate of time, and timeline for completing an evaluation of the specified wind turbine, and provides the proposal to ITAC for review.

- ITAC may accept or negotiate the proposal. If ITAC accepts the proposal, authorization to begin the assessment will be provided in writing. The authorization will summarize the statement of work and identify a not-to-exceed budget cap.
- If, during the course of the evaluation, the Contractor determines that additional time is required to complete the review, a request for an extension may be requested and negotiated with ITAC.
- Upon completion of the evaluation, Contractor delivers the final assessment to ITAC.
- Contractor submits an invoice documenting the time spent on the evaluation and any other expenses, based on the approved work plan, to ITAC.

Travel and non-hourly expenses must be pre-approved by ITAC, and will be reimbursed at a reasonable cost. Mileage will be reimbursed at the applicable federal mileage rate.

### **FUNDING**

Multiple contractors may be selected to provide technical assistance services for ITAC. ITAC anticipates allocating approximately \$20,000 per year for technical assistance services.

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### **RFQ SCHEDULE**

Posting of Request for Qualifications	January 20, 2012
Deadline to submit written questions	February 3, 2012
Posting of responses to submitted questions on website	February 8, 2012
<b>Submission Deadline</b>	<b>February 17, 2012, 5:00 p.m. EST</b>
Announcement of selected respondents	March 2, 2012

### **SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Respondents must submit to ITAC, by the Submission Deadline indicated in the table above, one complete, electronic copy of the Respondent's statement of qualifications in response to this RFQ. Electronic submissions may be submitted by the following methods: (i) stored on a CD, DVD, or USB memory device and delivered via U.S. mail or courier service, or (ii) e-mailed, with the subject clearly stating: *RFQ Response: Time Sensitive*. Submit electronic proposals to:

By mail or courier service:

Clean Energy States Alliance - ITAC  
 c/o Lizzie Rubado  
 50 State St., Suite 1  
 Montpelier, VT 05602

By e-mail:

Lizzie Rubado at [lizzie@cleanegroup.org](mailto:lizzie@cleanegroup.org)

### **REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Any questions and/or requests for clarification or additional information regarding this RFQ must be submitted in writing, via e-mail, to [lizzie@cleanegroup.org](mailto:lizzie@cleanegroup.org) by the deadline date indicated in the Table above. Subject line of the e-mailed question/request must clearly state: *RFQ Request for Additional Information*. Requests received on or prior to the stated deadline will be answered and posted on the ITAC project page of the Clean Energy States Alliance website at [www.cleanenergystates.org/projects/ITAC/RFQ](http://www.cleanenergystates.org/projects/ITAC/RFQ) by the date indicated in the Table above. Verbal discussions with individuals cannot be accommodated. Requests for additional information received via mail or fax will not be accommodated; all submissions must be via e-mail.

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## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Responses to this RFQ should not be excessively long or elaborate. Unnecessary attachments beyond those sufficient to present a complete, comprehensive, and effective response will not influence the evaluation of the proposal. Concise, yet complete submissions will be considered an indicator of the future effectiveness of the proposer.

Each page of the response should state the name of the Respondent and include a page number. Total length, excluding appendices, should not exceed 10 pages. Respondents will not be reimbursed by ITAC for any costs associated with the preparation of responses to this RFQ.

## **RESPONSE FORMAT**

### **SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS (*not to exceed 1 page*)**

Respondents should summarize their understanding of the objectives and requirements of this RFQ and describe their general approach to fulfilling them. Respondents should include a brief identification of key information about their firm, and briefly describe why they are qualified to perform the services as described in this RFQ.

Respondents should include the following information in their response:

- Firm name, description of primary business, address, telephone, e-mail address and contact person. Name and address of parent company (if applicable).
- Year firm was established

### **SECTION 2. QUALIFICATIONS**

Summarize the qualifications of the Respondent's firm. Describe the Respondent firm's primary business. Identify the key personnel that will be providing the technical assistance and include a short bio or resume that highlights recent, relevant experience of these personnel.

Include information on the Respondent's familiarity and knowledge of the topics described the in the RESPONDENT REQUIREMENTS of this RFQ. Describe any relevant certifications or training courses undertaken by key personnel.

### **SECTION 3. RELEVANT EXPERIENCES**

Describe one or more projects, reports, services or other experience provided by the firm that are relevant to the tasks outlined in the SERVICES REQUESTED section of this RFQ. Descriptions should specify the level of involvement of the Respondent in the work and identification of responsible staff. Provide references for the work described, and include contact names and phone numbers.

#### **SECTION 4. AVAILABILITY**

Describe the Respondent's availability to respond to requests for technical assistance throughout 2012. Provide typical response times for requests made by e-mail and phone.

#### **SECTION 5. RATES**

Describe the hourly billing rates for the key personnel described in Section 2.

#### **SECTION 6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE**

Disclose any direct or indirect, actual or potential conflicts of interest with ITAC, CESA or Clean Energy Group (CEG). A "direct or indirect conflict" is defined as any situation in which an individual or member of their family or close business or personal acquaintance, is employed by CESA or CEG, or may be reasonably construed to have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest in any business affairs of ITAC, CESA or CEG, whether because of a proposed contract or transaction to which ITAC, CESA or CEG may be a party or may be interested or is under consideration, or whether such conflict is purely conceptual, because of similarity of business interests or affairs.

If no such conflict exists, provide an explicit statement to that effect. The determination of whether a conflict of interest exists is left to ITAC, at its sole discretion.

#### **SECTION 7. ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURE**

The Respondent shall disclose any indictment for any alleged felony, or any conviction for a felony within the past five years, under the laws of the United States or any state or territory of the United States, and shall describe circumstances for each. If the Respondent is an association, partnership, corporation, or other organization, this disclosure requirement includes the organization and its officers, partners, and directors or members of any similarly governing body. If an indictment or conviction should come to the attention of ITAC after the award of a contract, ITAC may exercise its stop-work right pending further investigation, or terminate the agreement; the Contractor may be subject to penalties for violation of any law which may apply in the particular circumstances. Respondent proposers must also disclose if they have ever been debarred or suspended by any agency of the U.S. Government.

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#### **RFQ GOVERNING PROVISIONS**

***By submitting a response to this RFQ, Respondent represents that it is authorized to submit a response and explicitly agrees and accepts the following provisions of this RFQ and all other terms and conditions set forth in this RFQ.***

- A. Right to Accept or Reject:** This RFQ is not an agreement to purchase goods or services. ITAC is not bound to enter into a contract with any qualified Respondent. ITAC reserves the right to

modify the terms of this RFQ at any time at its sole discretion. This includes the right to cancel or revise this RFQ at any time. Further, ITAC reserves the right to waive any nonconformity in submissions received, to accept or reject any or all of the items in the submission, and award any ultimate contract in whole or in part as it is deemed in ITAC's best interest.

- B. Ownership of Responses:** All materials submitted in response to this RFQ shall become the property of ITAC and shall not be returned to the Respondent.
- C. Confidentiality:** Respondents shall clearly identify those proprietary portions of their responses that they do not want revealed to third parties outside of ITAC and ITAC participants, and label such portions as "Confidential Information." Except as required under ITAC policy or law, ITAC will maintain confidentiality of such information.
- D. Respondent Expenses:** Respondents are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing a response and for any subsequent negotiations. ITAC will not be liable to any Respondent for any claims, whether for costs or damages incurred by the Respondent in preparing the response, loss of anticipated profit in connection with any final contract or any other matter whatsoever.
- E. Criminal Record and Credit Check:** Respondents selected as finalists to this RFQ may be required to consent to a combined criminal record and credit check in order to proceed in the process. ITAC will obtain the respondent's consent to proceed with these checks.