

## **Informal Solicitation: 2008 NextGen Biodiesel Blending Grants**

### **I. Introduction**

The purpose of this Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Informal Solicitation is to provide potential applicants with the necessary information regarding the 2008 NextGen cold weather biodiesel blending infrastructure grants.

Minnesota Session Laws 2007, Chapter 45, established the NextGen Energy grant program (Laws of Minnesota 2007, Chapter 45, Article 1, Section 3, Subdivision 4), which appropriated \$3,000,000 for grants to bioenergy projects. In 2008, the Minnesota State Legislature modified the NextGen Energy grant program by diverting a portion of the appropriation to biodiesel blending infrastructure (Laws of Minnesota 2008, Chapter 297, Article 1, Section 72):

*Up to \$300,000 of the amount appropriated to the commissioner of agriculture for bioenergy grants under Laws 2007, chapter 45, article 1, section 3, subdivision 4, is for cold weather biodiesel blending infrastructure grants to facilities that serve Minnesota.*

Grants issued under this provision will result in additional infrastructure for cold weather biodiesel blending in areas of the state that have the greatest need for such capabilities. Grant funds may be used to offset the cost of necessary equipment including but not limited to tank, pipe, valves, meters, pumps, and heating equipment plus the cost of engineering, fabrication, and installation.

Facilities selected to receive a grant must offer biodiesel for at least a five-year term.

#### Criteria

Grant applications will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria (100 point maximum):

- *Applicability. (35 points)*
  - Service to areas of the state with the greatest need for cold weather biodiesel blends and where blending capabilities do not already exist; and
  - Proximity to petroleum terminals without cold weather biodiesel blending capabilities.
- Project cost relative to the facility's capacity, flexibility and proximity to terminals without blending capabilities. *(35 points)*
- Quality of design and installation plans. *(15 points)*
- Project feasibility. *(15 points)*
  - Technical capacity of applicant and significant partners; and
  - Economic feasibility of fulfilling project goals.

#### Questions

All questions concerning this Informal Solicitation should be submitted in writing or email to:

Christina Connelly  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
625 Robert St. N.  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538  
[Christina.Connelly@state.mn.us](mailto:Christina.Connelly@state.mn.us)

## II. Eligibility

Entities eligible to receive grants are owners of facilities that supply petroleum products to customers who sell, use, or transport fuel in the state of Minnesota. It is permissible for multi-entity partnerships to execute the project. However, only one of the entities must be identified as the official applicant.

## III. Application Process

### Required Information and Format

To be considered for a grant, applications must provide all required information as outlined in this Information Solicitation. Specifically, grant applications must include the following information:

1. **Contact information** (limited to one-half page, with project description):
  - a. Applicant/organization name;
  - b. Mailing address, city, state, zip code;
  - c. Contact name, title, email, phone number, fax number; and,
  - d. Applicant website (if applicable).
2. **Project description** (limited to one-half page, with contact information): Brief narrative describing partnerships and contributions (if applicable), as well as the facility and its potential to provide biodiesel blended fuels to underserved Minnesota diesel fuel markets in cold weather conditions.
3. **Timeline/proposed scope of work** (limited to two pages):
  - a. Major project phases and tasks, with estimated completion dates; and,
  - b. Estimated project completion date.
4. **Location** (limited to one page):
  - a. Location (address or map) of the facility's location; and,
  - b. Location of nearby petroleum terminals without blending capabilities.
5. **Design specifications and construction plans** (limited to three pages):
  - a. System layout and components;
  - b. Engineering designs;
  - c. Construction/installation plans;
  - d. Engineering certification; and,
  - e. Other information relevant to the design and construction of the project.
6. **Project costs** (limited to one page):
  - a. Anticipated costs for major project phases and tasks (including labor, equipment, engineering, fabrication and installation); and,
  - b. Estimated total project cost.
7. **Credentials** (limited to one page):
  - a. Experience and qualifications of applicant and significant partners providing technical expertise related specifically to the proposed project; and,
  - b. Description of existing resources/assets for blending or distributing diesel or biodiesel.
8. **Financial information** (limited to one page):
  - a. General description of assets and resources available to support the project;
  - b. Demonstrated need for State funding; and,
  - c. Financial statement (no limit—include as attachment(s)):
    - i. Internal financial statement for applicants with an annual income of under \$25,000 or who have not been in existence long enough to have completed an IRS Form 990;
    - ii. IRS Form 990 for applicants with an annual income of under \$350,000; or,
    - iii. Certified financial audit for applicants with an annual income of over \$350,000.
9. **Other grant information** (limited to one page): Dates, amounts, and purpose of previous grants or public funding received that are associated with the goal of this project (if applicable).

Applications and supporting materials must have minimum one-inch margins and 11-point font.

Application data are private or nonpublic data until grant applications are opened. Names, addresses and grant amounts then become public information. An entire application (with the exception of financial statements) becomes public when an agency has completed negotiating the grant agreement with a grantee. Individual grant applicants do not have to provide the information requested on the application form. However, we will not be able to consider grant requests that do not provide the requested information. The only persons who will have access to your data during the time that it is protected are those permitted access by law, by your written consent, by a court order or by those State employees whose job duties require access.

### Attachments

The nature of attachments will vary depending on project purpose and scope. Applicants are encouraged to provide supplemental information to accurately communicate information such as:

- Evidence of technical and economic feasibility of the project;
- Evidence of financial and technical capability of applicant;
- Letters of commitment; and
- Resume(s) supporting qualifications described in the application.

### Submission

Applications are limited to 11 pages (not including attachments) and must be submitted in the following formats:

1. A hard copy of the complete application and attachments, addressed to:  
Christina Connelly  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
625 Robert St. N.  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538
2. An electronic Microsoft Word version of the application and attachments in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF format (zipped files not accepted), emailed to: [Christina.Connelly@state.mn.us](mailto:Christina.Connelly@state.mn.us). (Please state “[Applicant’s Name] – re: Grant Proposal” in the subject line).

Faxed submittals will not be accepted.

*If you anticipate or experience difficulties in submitting the application electronically, please contact Christina Connelly prior to the submittal deadline at (651)201-6220 or [Christina.Connelly@state.mn.us](mailto:Christina.Connelly@state.mn.us).*

### Deadlines

Applications must be received by **Friday, December 12, 2008 by 4:00 p.m. Central Standard Time**. Applicants will be notified whether they are selected for a grant by **January 2009**.

### Terms and Conditions

1. The MDA reserves the right to amend or cancel this Informal Solicitation at any time if the best interest of the State requires such action.
2. The MDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received and to accept any portion of a proposal if deemed in the best interest of the State.
3. The MDA assumes no liability in any fashion with respect to this Informal Solicitation or any matters related thereto. All prospective service providers and their assigns or successors, by their participation in the Informal Solicitation process, shall indemnify, save and hold the Department and its employees and agents free and harmless from all suits, causes of action, debts, rights, judgments, claims, demands, accounts, damages, costs, losses and expenses of whatsoever kind in law or equity, known and unknown, foreseen and unforeseen, arising from or out of this Informal Solicitation and/or

any subsequent acts related thereto, including but not limited to the recommendation of a service provider and any action brought by an unsuccessful prospective service provider.

#### **IV. Review and Evaluation of Applications**

Applicants must submit applications with all required information and by the deadlines specified in this Informal Solicitation (see Section III, “Deadlines”).

Applications will be reviewed by a technical committee that includes members from the Minnesota Departments of Agriculture and Commerce. The technical committee will score and rank all applications to determine which project(s) best meet the needs of the State. The technical committee will recommend grant recipient(s) to the Commissioner of Agriculture, who will make the final decision.

Applications will include a detailed work plan and budget, and if applicable, authorizing resolutions and letters of support. Grant awards are contingent on available funding, determination of which project(s) will be most beneficial to the State’s needs, and the Applicant’s successful execution of the grant agreement within the specified timeframe.

**Trade Secret Information:** All information submitted as part of the application is public or will become public information, unless it qualifies as trade secret information under Minnesota Statutes 13.37, subd. 1(b). The applicant shall use its best efforts to prepare reports and other information without disclosing trade secret or sales information. For more information on this topic, please contact Christina Connelly at (651) 201-6220 or [Christina.Connelly@state.mn.us](mailto:Christina.Connelly@state.mn.us).

#### **V. Grantee Responsibilities**

Applicant(s) selected to receive a grant must adhere to certain reporting requirements, including annual submission of a Minnesota Business Assistance Form ([http://www.deed.state.mn.us/Community/pdf/MBAF\\_nonJOBZ.pdf](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/Community/pdf/MBAF_nonJOBZ.pdf)). Additional details regarding grantee responsibilities will be outlined in a contract between the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Grantee.