

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: SOLAR AND STORAGE PROGRAM DESIGN CONSULTANT

PROPONENT QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

January 22, 2024

1. Is there a set budget range for this project?

Can The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) please provide a budget range? This will allow proponents to focus on and adequately prepare responses aligned to TAF's anticipated budget envelope.

Could you provide guidance on the budget range or any financial limitations for the overall project to better tailor our proposed solutions?

No budget range has been set for this project, and fair consideration will be given to proposals with a sound and justified budget that provides TAF with fair value-for-money. Note that, as outlined in Appendix A, 30% of the evaluation points available are allocated to core pricing.

2. Is there any research, primary or secondary, that would be useful to be considered in developing this project?

Are there any projects, local or international, that would be a good example of what a successful program might look like for TAF?

Identifying and reviewing relevant research literature will be the responsibility of the selected consultant, and a scan and summary of model programs and/or practices from jurisdictions outside of Ontario is included in the scope of work under Objective 1. The user experience of these programs is of particular interest to TAF.

3. The timeline for delivery of all components is extremely tight for the scope, and also involves an engagement component. Does TAF have flexibility to extend the end date?

Yes, there is a reasonable degree of flexibility around the project end date, and we would not want concerns over the project timeline to preclude interested parties from submitting a proposal. As such, **we have revised the project end date to June 28, 2024**. The posted RFP has been updated to reflect this change.

4. Section 2 of 4.2 requires providing total of three references for similar work. Do you mean three references for each person mentioned in the team or three references for [consultancy name]?

The request for references for similar work applies to the consultancy and not individual staff members. This provision allows TAF to assess the consultancy's performance on similar projects and verify that it has the experience, skills, and expertise to ensure a successful program design.

5. Is TAF looking to understand how similar programs in other countries be adapted to the GTHA market? [consultancy name] has executed similar programs in other countries.

As part of Objective 1, the consultant should conduct a scan of programs in other jurisdictions in which solar adoption has been successful, with a focus on those that have prioritized the user experience and with models that could be transferred over to the Ontario context. The consultant should not feel the need to constrain this scan to a specific geography, but should consider its applicability to the Ontario market.

6. Is the goal to create a program to increase adoption of solar/storage for residents and business owners? Can electrification of vehicles, district energy systems, microgrids also be included as part of this program?

Yes, the goal is to create a program to increase adoption of solar and storage for residents and business owners. While we recognize solutions such as electrification of vehicles, district energy systems, and microgrids have applicability and complementarity in this context, we are specifically focusing on solar and storage with this program.

7. For financing options, is TAF interested in understanding how current financing options can be utilised or what new financing options can be created?

Is TAF looking for an exploration of both tested and innovative (possibly untested) financing models?

For the scan and assessment of financing options (Objective 2, item a), the selected consultant will need to look at current models that have proven successful. However, for the recommended approach to financing for this program (Objective 2, item b) we are open to, and encourage, novel and innovative approaches that are tailored to the target market.

8. Could you specify the expectations around the number of other jurisdictions to be included in the landscape analysis? Should this review extend beyond the models specified in the RFP, such as NY-Sun, Solarize Virginia, Solar Switch, Solar Over Louisville, and Grid Alternatives?

Those models specified in the RFP are provided as examples of North American programs one might look to for inspiration, but the consultant need not restrict their scan to only these examples. The review of model programs from other jurisdictions should include 5-10 programs based on the consultant's judgement around which programs are most relevant and applicable to TAF's goals and the Ontario context.

9. Are there any jurisdictions that are of particular interest to TAF? For example those that are comparable to Ontario?

TAF is interested in solar programs from any jurisdictions which could have applicability in the GTHA/Ontario context. While programs in jurisdictions comparable to Ontario are inherently interesting to us, other different markets may have programs with some applicable or transferrable components.

10. Are community purchase programs, which have been tested in other jurisdictions, considered within the scope of financing options for this project?

We are open to community purchase programs as long as they take into consideration the policy and regulatory regimes that currently exist in Ontario.

11. Given the focus on two use cases outlined in the proposal, could you clarify whether these cases represent the primary focus or is TAF looking for a broader range of financing options that cover the diverse target audience that will be identified as part of the project?

The selected consultant will support the development of financing solutions that address two specific use cases: small-sized installations for low- and middle-income residents; and medium-sized installations for commercial and institutional organizations. We believe solving for these two markets will in turn help to catalyze a pathway to wider markets.

12. We understand the target audience includes residential and business customers interested in generating/managing their own electricity with behind the meter DERs. Is that correct?

Yes, this is correct. We expect the education and outreach encompassed within the program design to generate new interest as well.

13. Does TAF also aim to include the following with behind the meter DERs within the scope of this program:

a. Residential homeowners in both urban/suburban and potentially rural areas?

The GTHA encompasses urban, suburban, and rural areas and the scope of the program should therefore consider urban, suburban, and rural residents.

b. Community solar projects that serve a collective of residents or businesses?

If community net metering policy evolves, we would be open to including community solar projects in the program that serve a collective of residents or businesses.

c. Industrial customers?

Not at this time, although we expect that some of the barriers addressed with this program would benefit industrial customers as well.

d. Public sector and community-use buildings such as hospitals, schools, government offices, libraries, faith centers, and parking lots?

We are certainly open to the inclusion of these building types, but it should be noted that we are specifically targeting small and medium sized customers at this time, the specific definitions of which would be informed by this assignment.

14. Are there kW/kWh or other technical specifications that define the target audience for the program? For instance, are there any system size limitations for residential, community, or business entities that determine eligibility for the program?

We expect that there will need to be system size definitions to determine eligibility, but these would be developed through this assignment and informed by current policies and regulations.

15. Are there specific community engagement and education outcomes that TAF is aiming for, or is this primarily at the consultant's discretion?

As we aim to make customer-sited solar generation part of the status quo in Ontario, engagement, outreach, and education will be critical to overall customer adoption; it is expected that the selected consultant would work closely with TAF to define community engagement and educational outcomes.