



# Request for Proposals

in support of

**Southeastern VISTAS II Regional Haze Analysis Project**

**December 21, 2017**

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## **SOUTHEASTERN STATES AIR RESOURCE MANAGERS, INC.**

### **Request for Proposals Southeastern VISTAS II Regional Haze Analysis Project**

#### **I. PURPOSE OF SOLICITATION.**

The Southeastern state air pollution control agencies, as outlined in Section II. below, along with collaborating local air pollution control agencies, are requesting contractual services to assist in evaluation of current and projected future visibility in the Southeast. This will include but not be limited to updating the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) emission inventories for 2028, conducting air quality modeling starting with EPA's 2011/2028v6.3el modeling platform, projecting potential 2028 visibility impacts in mandatory Class I Federal areas, conducting source apportionment analyses of results, providing presentations of results, producing project reports, and archiving support information and final conclusions.

#### **II. INTRODUCTION TO SESARM AND THE PARTICIPATING AGENCIES.**

Southeastern States Air Resource Managers Inc. (SESARM) is a corporation registered in the State of Georgia and organized under the nonprofit provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, Title 26, Subtitle A, Chapter 1, Subchapter F, Part I, Section 501 (c)(3). SESARM serves the needs of the air pollution control agencies in ten southeastern states – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. All but Virginia and West Virginia were charter members. The latter two states became SESARM members July 1, 2013. SESARM maintains its corporate office in Stockbridge, Georgia and shares office space and staff with Metro 4, Inc., a nonprofit corporation representing 17 local air pollution control agencies in Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

The EPA designated SESARM and its original eight members states as the organization responsible for conducting regional air quality planning in the Southeast to support regional haze needs of the states. SESARM created a collaborative effort called Visibility Improvement – State and Tribal Association of the Southeast (VISTAS) to assess regional haze issues and develop recommendations for consideration by the participating states. In 2001, SESARM invited the contiguous states of Virginia and West Virginia to join the regional haze effort. SESARM also invited the local agencies in the Southeast to be represented. Metro 4 designated the Knox County, Tennessee air pollution control program to be that representative. Although southeastern Native American tribes are not required to develop and submit tribal implementation plans, SESARM invited the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) to represent the six federally recognized Southeastern tribes in the

first round of regional haze work. The VISTAS states will continue to participate in this forthcoming regional haze effort and Metro 4 will be represented in a manner yet to be determined. Tribal participation will be invited but is uncertain at this point. It has been several years since EBCI has been a regular participant. The Pamunkey Indian Tribe in Virginia was designated as a federally-recognized tribe in January 2016 so there are now a total of 7 recognized tribes within the VISTAS region.

A memorandum of understanding was developed in 2001 by SESARM and executed among the participating agencies to formalize their regional haze project commitment as well as to establish formal goals and procedures for technical air quality analyses. The project described herein will operate within the combined policy and operational structures of the VISTAS organization as modified for this round of regional haze work and the formal SESARM corporate structure. At a minimum, there will be a policy committee consisting of the SESARM Board of Directors, local agency representative(s), and tribal representative(s). There will also be a Coordinating Committee that will oversee general planning and operations and offer direction for the technical work. A Technical Analysis Work Group will oversee the actual technical work and create subgroups and teams to focus on specific categories of technical needs. Much of the actual technical oversight and technical work will be conducted by emission inventory and modeling subgroups and by various technical teams operating under those subgroups.

SESARM will be the contracting entity for all technical work authorized for this project.

### **III. CLEAN AIR ACT STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY.**

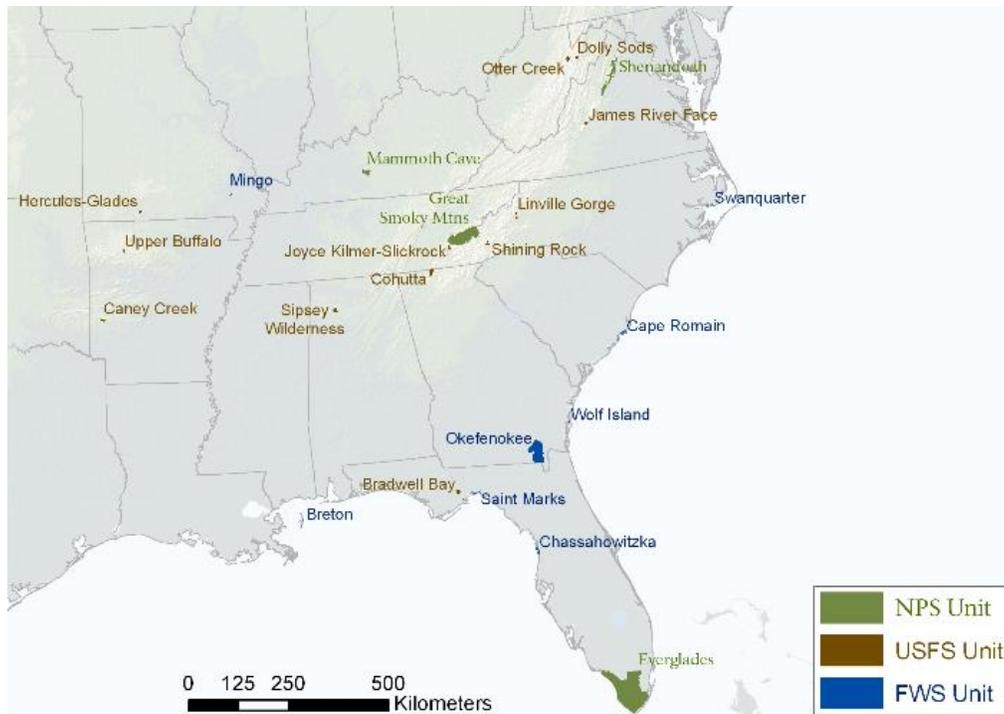
In Section 169A of the Clean Air Act, Congress established a visibility protection goal to prevent future and remedy existing impairment of visibility resulting from manmade pollution in certain national parks and wilderness areas. The statute was codified at 42 U.S. Code §7491. EPA issued regulations implementing the visibility protection mandate that may be found at 40 CFR 51.300 through 51.309. These regulations have been amended several times, most recently as published in the *Federal Register* on January 10, 2017.

The 1999 Regional Haze Rule (RHR) (64 FR 35714) identified 156 parks and natural areas as “mandatory Class I Federal areas” for which goals would be established to improve visibility to natural conditions. The 18 Class I areas located in the VISTAS region are tabulated in Table 1 that follows. Each row contains the official Class I area name, the state(s) in which it is located, estimated total land area in acres based on current available information, and the designated Federal Land Manager (FLM).

<b>Table 1. VISTAS REGION FEDERAL CLASS I AREAS LIST</b>		
<b>(STATE) CLASS I AREA NAME</b>	<b>APPROX. ACREAGE</b>	<b>FEDERAL LAND MANAGER</b>
AL – Sipsev Wilderness Area	12,726	USDA Forest Service
FL – Chassahowitzka Wilderness Area	23,579	USDI Fish and Wildlife Service
FL – Everglades National Park	1,399,078	USDI National Park Service
FL – Saint Marks Wilderness Area	17,350	USDI Fish and Wildlife Service
GA/TN – Cohutta Wilderness Area	GA – 35,268 TN – 1,709	USDA Forest Service
GA – Okefenokee Wilderness Area	353,981	USDI Fish and Wildlife Service
GA – Wolf Island Wilderness	5,126	USDI Fish and Wildlife Service
KY – Mammoth Cave National Park	52,830	USDI National Park Service
NC/TN – Great Smoky Mountains National Park	NC – 277,432 TN – 244,645	USDI National Park Service
NC/TN – Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness	NC – 13,590 TN – 3,820	USDA Forest Service
NC – Linville Gorge Wilderness Area	11,651	USDA Forest Service
NC – Shining Rock Wilderness Area	18,479	USDA Forest Service
NC – Swanquarter Wilderness Area	8,800	USDI Fish and Wildlife Service
SC – Cape Romain Wilderness	29,000	USDI Fish and Wildlife Service
VA – James River Face Wilderness	8,907	USDA Forest Service
VA – Shenandoah National Park	199,173	USDI National Park Service
WV – Dolly Sods Wilderness	17,776	USDA Forest Service
WV – Otter Creek Wilderness	20,706	USDA Forest Service

*USDA – United States Department of Agriculture. USDI – United States Department of Interior.*

A map of the VISTAS Class I areas follows in Figure 1. Please note that the Bradwell Bay Wilderness in Florida, while listed on the map that follows, is not one of the 18 VISTAS Class I areas that is covered by the RHR.



**Figure 1. VISTAS Region Class I Areas.**

The 1999 RHR required states to define long-term strategies to improve visibility in Federal Class I national parks and wilderness areas. States were required to establish baseline visibility conditions for the period 2000-2004, natural visibility conditions in the absence of anthropogenic influences, and an expected rate of progress to reduce emissions and improve visibility systematically to reach natural visibility conditions by 2064. The original RHR required states to improve visibility on the 20% most impaired days and protect visibility on the 20% clearest days. States were required to submit SIPs by December 17, 2007 demonstrating reasonable progress to achieve incremental visibility improvements for the 2008-2018 planning period.

The RHR requires states to evaluate progress toward visibility improvement goals every five years and submit revised state implementation plans (SIPs) every ten years. States are to consult with FLMs in developing the SIPs.

EPA finalized revisions to various requirements of the RHR in January 2017 (82 FR 3078) that were designed to strengthen, streamline, and clarify certain aspects of the agency's regional haze program including:

- A. Strengthening the FLM consultation requirements to ensure that issues and concerns are brought forward early in the planning process.

- B. Updating the SIP submittal deadlines for the second planning period from July 31, 2018 to July 31, 2021 to ensure that they align where applicable with other state obligations under the Clean Air Act. The end date for the second planning period remains 2028; that is, the focus of state planning will be emission reduction measures that should be achieved by 2028, as was required by the original RHR. This extension will allow states to incorporate planning for other federal programs including the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, the 2010 1-hour SO<sub>2</sub> National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), the 2012 annual fine particle (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) NAAQS, and the 2008 and 2015 ozone NAAQS while conducting their regional haze planning.
- C. Adjusting interim progress report submission deadlines so that second and subsequent progress reports will be due by January 31, 2025, July 31, 2033, and every 10 years thereafter. This means that one progress report will be required mid-way through each planning period.
- D. Removing the requirement for progress reports to take the form of SIP revisions. States will be required to consult with FLMs and obtain public comment on their progress reports before submission to the EPA. EPA will be reviewing but not formally approving or disapproving these progress reports.

#### **IV. PROJECT SUMMARY AND GOALS.**

This project may be referenced as the “VISTAS II Project” or simply the “VISTAS Project.”

The SESARM member agencies are mandated to protect human health and the environment from the impacts of air pollutants. They are responsible for air quality planning and management efforts including development, adoption, and implementation of strategies controlling and managing all air pollutants including fine particles, ozone, and regional haze. This project will focus on regional haze and regional haze precursor emissions. Control of regional haze precursor emissions will have the additional benefit of reducing criteria pollutants as well.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) will mainly focus on emissions inventory development and emissions/air quality modeling. The work products from this RFP will be used by the states to develop SIPs that will be submitted to EPA in the 2019-2021 timeframe.

The selected Contractor shall perform tasks specified herein and shall provide data, results, summaries, and conclusions to SESARM. Documentation and reports shall be completed in a manner that is consistent with EPA requirements, as provided to the Contractor by SESARM. The Contractor shall participate in meetings, conference calls, and/or webinars to brief Metro 4 and SESARM agencies as well as project stakeholders.

The contract resulting from this RFP will include tasks the SESARM states know for certain must be completed. The contract may also include optional tasks the Contractor may be asked to complete depending on how much of EPA's inventory and modeling work may be incorporated into the VISTAS II project and additional needs that may be discovered during initial phases of the project.

## **V. SOURCES OF FUNDING, USE, AND LIMITATIONS.**

This project will be funded primarily with federal grant funds awarded to SESARM under the authority of Section 103 of the Clean Air Act. The specific Section 103 grant to SESARM is Grant # XA-00D53517. SESARM also anticipates having available 10% of its funding from direct contributions by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Contrary to the funding arrangement for the first round of regional haze SIPs, neither EPA nor Congress has allocated special funding to SESARM or other regional planning organizations to support the second round of SIPs. All current funding has come from direct or indirect contributions from the VISTAS agencies.

SESARM is responsible for grant applications as well as receipt, disbursement, and management of federal grant funds to support the VISTAS II project. Authorization of reimbursable work pursuant to this RFP may be suspended or terminated by SESARM due to various considerations including but not limited to:

- A. loss of adequate funding to complete the project as initially conceived;
- B. changes in EPA regional haze requirements;
- C. failure of a contractor to conform to all applicable financial accountability standards including federal grant requirements; and/or
- D. failure of a contractor to perform as required under executed contract conditions.

Pursuant to the final analysis of bids and bidder capabilities, SESARM reserves the right to award contracts to multiple bidders if deemed more suitable for desired project outcomes, cost containment, and other factors. Bidders may collaborate with other service providers to propose a team approach for this project that may be incorporated into a single final contract.

## **VI. SCOPE OF WORK, TASKS, AND DELIVERABLES.**

- A. General Expectations.

Bidders shall provide a detailed description of proposed work consistent with the tasks described throughout this section of the RFP.

This project is designed to utilize as much recent EPA regional haze analysis work as possible. Contractor support will be utilized to evaluate EPA's emissions and modeling work and enhance those efforts to ensure that SESARM states will have accurate and appropriate data inputs to the air quality model and the most reliable model outputs for regional haze SIP development purposes.

B. Task 1. Project Management.

Effective project management and communications are essential to meeting the requirements of the federal regional haze program. Under this task, the Contractor shall budget time and resources to complete the following:

1. Subtask 1.1. Contract Management.

- a. The Contractor shall perform careful and comprehensive project oversight to ensure conformance to all federal grant requirements and all terms and conditions of the contract. Constant monitoring of requirements and performance shall be undertaken to ensure compliance with these requirements.
- b. Work on this project shall be limited to development of the contract, the work plan, and the quality assurance documents until EPA has approved the quality assurance project plan(s) (QAPPs).
- c. The Contractor shall be familiar with and conform to all terms and conditions of the contract.
- d. The Contractor shall manage project activities to produce required deliverables that meet all administrative, technical, quality, schedule, and cost requirements.
- e. The Contractor shall identify any problems affecting compliance with the contract at the earliest possible date, inform SESARM immediately thereafter, and work with SESARM to rectify any compliance issues as soon as practicable.

2. Subtask 1.2. Contract Development.

The Contractor shall work closely with SESARM to develop and execute a project contract and shall comply with all terms and conditions upon execution.

3. Subtask 1.3. Work Plan Development.

- a. The Contractor shall produce and deliver to SESARM within 14 calendar days after Contract execution a draft work plan consistent with this RFP,

the executed contract, applicable federal guidance, and any other requirements provided by SESARM to the Contractor. The Contractor shall amend the draft work plan and resubmit a proposed final work plan to SESARM within 7 calendar days of receipt of comments from SESARM.

- b. The work plan shall incorporate appropriate methodologies and techniques for thoroughly and efficiently completing prescribed tasks. The work plan shall provide details of methods and approaches that will be used in the project including evaluation products and software tools.
  - c. The work plan shall contain a detailed list of deliverables associated with each task, the schedule for deliverables for each task, staff assignments, and other pertinent information for each task.
4. Subtask 1.4. QAPP Development.
- a. SESARM, as a federal grant recipient, is governed by grant conditions as well as federal regulations establishing quality assurance requirements. SESARM is obligated to submit to EPA for review one or more QAPPs at least 60 days prior to initiating collection and/or use of environmental data. SESARM and its contractors are prohibited from initiating any such work until the QAPP(s) for such work has been formally approved by EPA.
  - b. The Contractor shall produce and deliver to SESARM within 14 calendar days of approval of the project work plan one or more draft QAPP documents consistent with this RFP, the executed contract, EPA quality assurance requirements, and other requirements provided by SESARM to the Contractor. The QAPP(s) shall address all applicable project tasks and shall describe data collection and evaluation, model performance evaluation, and modeling procedures and processes. The QAPP(s) shall include appropriate policies, procedures, specifications, standards, documentation, communications, and other activities necessary to ensure the accuracy and dependability of all data collected, used, and produced during the project. The Contractor shall incorporate necessary standards and procedures to minimize costs, time required to complete the project, and repetitive work.
  - c. Upon submittal of the QAPP(s) by the Contractor to SESARM, a team of staff from SESARM and its participating agencies will promptly review the QAPP(s) and provide comments to the Contractor. The Contractor shall amend the draft QAPP(s) and resubmit to SESARM the proposed final QAPP(s) within 7 calendar days of receipt of comments from SESARM. When SESARM has accepted the proposed QAPP(s), SESARM shall transmit to EPA for review. EPA's Science and Ecosystem Support Division (SESD) is the ultimate authority for approving quality assurance documents. SESARM will work with SESD to expedite completion of

QAPP approvals. Any edits required by EPA will be promptly provided to the Contractor by SESARM upon receipt and the Contractor shall promptly make such edits. SESARM will submit the final edited QAPP(s) to EPA for official approval and will provide a copy of the executed QAPP(s) to the Contractor upon receipt. At that time, SESARM will authorize in writing appropriate work to begin on a task-by-task basis.

5. Subtask 1.5. Communications.

- a. The Contractor shall regularly communicate with the SESARM Project Coordinator to provide updates and discuss project challenges.
- b. The Contractor shall participate in periodic calls with project work groups, teams, directors, and stakeholders to provide updates on progress of the project and to seek input and guidance.
- c. The Contractor shall respond as soon as practicable to all reasonable inquiries and requests for information from SESARM.

6. Subtask 1.6. Reports.

The Contractor shall conform to the following reporting requirements:

- a. The Contractor shall provide monthly progress reports within two weeks of the end of each calendar month, outlining administrative, technical, and quality progress to-date as well as any problems that need to be addressed.
- b. The Contractor shall provide draft reports at the conclusion of prescribed portions of the contract consistent with the terms and conditions of the contract. Summaries of quality assurance procedures completed for each task shall be delivered with relevant draft reports and draft data transmittals. The Contractor shall respond to comments on draft reports in a timely manner and shall edit draft reports to incorporate valid concerns provided by SESARM at the conclusion of which the Contractor shall provide final reports to SESARM.
- c. The Contractor shall prepare a draft and final report to detail, document and summarize the final results of the contract work. A complete outline of the report will not be specified in this RFP. However, the final report shall contain, at a minimum:
  - i. An executive summary that provides a brief overview and summary of the modeling effort, emissions and air quality models used, model configuration, model performance evaluation overview and results, and rationale for the selected configuration;

- ii. Summaries of quality assurance procedures completed for the project.
  - iii. Technical details for all technical work performed as part of this project;
  - iv. Summaries and conclusions;
  - v. A list of all final work products being delivered; and
  - vi. A discussion of data accessibility and availability for review by SESARM, stakeholders, and the public.
- d. A draft outline of the report shall be prepared for review by SESARM prior to the distribution of the draft report.
- e. Within four (4) weeks of receiving comments from SESARM, a final report shall be submitted to SESARM. The Contractor shall submit two (2) hard copies of the final report to SESARM for its files and for transmittal to EPA. An electronic copy of the report in Microsoft Word (\*.docx) format shall be submitted to SESARM and shall be made available on the Technical Web Site developed pursuant to Task 10.
- f. In addition to written, comprehensive project reports, the Contractor shall provide project summaries in the form of slide presentations that can be distributed to VISTAS agencies and stakeholders to inform them of progress and findings.
7. Subtask 1.7. Invoicing.
- a. The Contractor shall submit project invoices to SESARM on a calendar month or calendar quarter basis, at the option of the Contractor.
  - b. The Contractor shall develop, maintain and transmit to SESARM documentation of work conducted that is the basis for all invoices. Documentation shall be submitted to SESARM summarizing the work that is the basis for each current invoice. Said documentation may be in the form of the monthly progress reports as described in Subtask 1.6 as specified in this RFP.

C. Task 2. Emissions Inventory Development.

The Contractor shall utilize EPA 2011 and 2028 emissions inventories from its 2011/2028v6.3el regional haze modeling platform except where SESARM requests adjustments for any individual sources and/or source categories.

1. Subtask 2.1. 2011 Base Year Emissions Inventories.

The Contractor shall use EPA's 2011 base year emissions inventories that were used in EPA's 2011/2028v6.3el regional haze modeling platform. There will be no revisions to EPA's 2011 base year emissions inventories.

2. Subtask 2.2. Projection Year Emissions Inventory Comparisons

For each SESARM state, the Contractor shall prepare summary comparisons of EPA's 2028v6.3el modeling platform emissions to the 2023v6.3en modeling platform emissions for stationary electricity generating unit (EGU) and non-EGU point sources. These summaries shall be prepared by facility, emissions unit, process, and release point identifiers and source classification code (SCC). The summaries shall compare annual NO<sub>x</sub>, VOC, PM<sub>2.5</sub>-PRI, PM<sub>10</sub>-PRI, SO<sub>2</sub>, and NH<sub>3</sub> emissions between the two inventories. To facilitate state agency review, the Contractor shall compile these summaries in a separate Excel file for each SESARM state.

For EGU sources only, the Contractor shall prepare summary comparisons of EPA's 2028v6.3el modeling platform emissions to the 2028 emissions forecast produced by the Eastern Regional Technical Advisory Committee (ERTAC) projection tool and make updates to the EGU inventory as requested by SESARM states. SESARM will provide the ERTAC EGU data to the Contractor. These summaries shall be prepared by facility/ORIS, emissions unit, process, and release point identifiers and source classification code (SCC). The summaries shall compare annual SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, VOC, PM<sub>2.5</sub>-PRI, PM<sub>10</sub>-PRI, and NH<sub>3</sub> emissions between the two inventories. To facilitate state agency review, the Contractor shall compile these summaries in a separate Excel file for each SESARM state.

3. Subtask 2.3. Revisions to 2028 Projection Year Emissions Inventories

a. Electricity Generating Unit (EGU) Point Source Emissions.

- i. As by requested SESARM states, the Contractor shall revise the 2028 mass emissions inventory to incorporate revisions associated with changes in emissions due to retirements, control enhancements, and/or fuel switches.
- ii. The Contractor shall document all revisions to the 2028 inventory.

b. Non-EGU Point Source Emissions.

- i. As by requested SESARM States, the Contractor shall revise the 2028 mass emissions inventory to incorporate revisions associated with changes in emissions due to retirements, control enhancements,

and/or fuel switches.

ii. The Contractor shall document all revisions to the 2028 inventory.

c. Emissions for Other Categories.

i. Unless otherwise requested by SESARM, the Contractor shall utilize EPA's 2028 emissions projections for other categories including but not limited to the following:

- On-road mobile source emissions;
- Non-road mobile source emissions;
- Marine, aircraft, and rail (MAR) mobile source emissions;
- Fire emissions;
- Area source emissions. Please see the paragraph for Optional Subtask 2.2.1. below which may influence the required work on area source emissions.
- Biogenics; and
- International emissions.

ii. Upon completing the compilation of 2028 emissions for other categories, the Contractor shall prepare the emissions data for processing.

d. Optional Subtask 2.3.1.

The Contractor shall provide a cost estimate for preparing emissions summary comparisons of the 2028v6.3el and 2023v6.3en emissions modeling platforms for both stationary area sources, and MAR non-road mobile sources. This estimate shall be developed for summaries by county and SCC for a single SESARM state (assume North Carolina), and for the same pollutants as identified under Subtask 2.2. This cost estimate shall also include the effort to replace the 2028v6.3el emissions with 2028 stationary area/MAR non-road mobile emissions supplied by SESARM.

e. 2028 Documentation.

The Contractor shall document all revisions to the 2028 inventory.

4. Subtask 2.4. Emission Summaries and Quality Assurance.

Upon completion of updates to 2028 emissions as agreed upon, the Contractor shall prepare 2011 and 2028 emission summaries in Excel format by state for the EGU, non-EGU point, area, on-road, non-road, and MAR source categories. The summaries for EGU and non-EGU point shall be prepared like the summaries prepared under Subtask 2.2. The summaries for the area, on-road, non-road, and MAR categories shall be prepared by state, county SCC, and pollutant. The Contractor shall conduct and document quality assurance review to ensure that all of the revisions to the 2028 emissions are performed correctly.

D. Task 3. Emissions Processing.

1. Subtask 3.1. The Contractor shall create photochemical model ready EGU emission files for 2028.

The Contractor shall conduct and document quality assurance review to ensure that all of the revisions to the 2028 air quality model input file are performed correctly.

a. Optional Subtask 3.1.1.

The Contractor shall provide a cost estimate to conduct a full EGU emissions replacement for the entire modeling domain with ERTAC EGU emissions and temporal profiles. The SMOKE file containing the hourly ERTAC EGU emissions will be provided to the Contractor by SESARM. The Contractor shall incorporate adequate effort to ensure that no facilities are dropped or double-counted.

b. Optional Subtask 3.1.2.

The Contractor shall provide a cost estimate to scale EPA hourly SMOKE emissions up or down based on state adjustments to match the annual 2028 emissions projections. The annual EGU emissions will be provided to the Contractor by SESARM.

2. Subtask 3.2. The Contractor shall create photochemical model ready non-EGU emission files for 2028.

The Contractor shall revise the 2028 air quality model input files for non-EGU point sources to incorporate SESARM state requests to revise 2028 emissions. The Contractor shall propose an approach and cost estimate for completing this task by applying one or more of the following methods:

- a. Revise EPA's air quality modeling input file by scaling hourly emissions up or down based on state adjustments to annual 2028 emissions. Assume that the SESARM states will provide the Contractor with the updated 2028 annual emissions and/or scaling ratios.
  - b. Develop a new air quality input file by using the Sparse Matrix Operator Kernel Emissions (SMOKE) Modeling System model to convert an updated mass emissions inventory file to an air quality input file. Assume that the SESARM states will provide the Contractor with the revised mass emissions inventory file for 2028.
  - c. Propose an alternate method.
3. Subtask 3.3. The Contractor shall merge the updated 2028 EGU and non-EGU emission files with the original 2028 emission files for other source categories (or the revised 2028 emission files for stationary area and MAR mobile sources as developed under option Subtask 2.3.1), and prepare the data for use in the CAMx model.

E. Task 4. Data Acquisition and Preparation.

The Contractor shall collect appropriate ambient air quality monitoring data to evaluate model performance including but not limited to:

1. Total and speciated light extinction at Class I areas (in inverse megameters) downloaded from EPA's website.
2. Optional Subtask 4.1.

The Contractor shall provide a cost estimate for collecting the following additional data for potential use by SESARM states to support other projects such as evaluation of acid deposition in watersheds:

- a. Weekly wet deposition; e.g., sulfate, nitrate, ammonium, hydrogen ion, and base cations ( $Mg^{2+}$  and  $Ca^{2+}$ ), and
- b. Weekly dry deposition; e.g.,  $SO_2$  (gas),  $NO_2$  (gas),  $NO$  (gas),  $NH_3$  (gas),  $HNO_3$  (gas),  $HONO$  (gas),  $N_2O_5$  (gas),  $SO_4^{2-}$  (PM),  $NO_3^-$  (PM),  $NH_4^+$  (PM),  $Mg^{2+}$  (PM),  $Ca^{2+}$  (PM).

F. Task 5. Area of Influence Analysis.

The Contractor shall perform an area of influence analysis for each IMPROVE monitor in the VISTAS\_12 domain. The analysis will include:

1. Perform 6 years of HYSPLIT 72-hour back trajectories for 2011-2016 on the

20% most impaired days using NAM-12 meteorology and starting trajectory heights of 100 meters (m), 500 m, 1,000 m, and 1,500 m.

2. Create gridded back trajectory residence time (RT) plots using the 2011-2016 HYSPLIT trajectories and CAMx 12-km modeling grid cells.
3. Create sulfate-weighted and nitrate-weighted gridded back trajectory residence time plots using the 2011-2016 HYSPLIT trajectories, sulfate and nitrate concentrations at the IMPROVE monitor, and CAMx 12-km modeling grid cells.
4. Combine gridded distance-weighted SO<sub>2</sub> emissions with sulfate-weighted gridded back trajectory residence time plots and combine gridded distance-weighted NO<sub>x</sub> emissions with nitrate-weighted gridded back trajectory residence time plots.
5. For the 2011 and 2028 point source inventories, create an Excel spreadsheet ranking SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions contributions from each point source facility. The spreadsheet shall contain:
  - a. FIPSST.
  - b. State.
  - c. FIPSCNTY.
  - d. County.
  - e. Plant ID.
  - f. Plant name.
  - g. SIC.
  - h. Industry description.
  - i. 2011 SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions.
  - j. 2028 SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions.
  - k. Distance (km).
  - l. Q/d for SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>.
  - m. Q/d<sup>2</sup> for SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>.

- n. Extinction-weighted residence time (EWRT)
  - o.  $EWRT \cdot Q/d$  for  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$ .
  - p. Fraction contribution for  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$ .
  - q. Sum contribution for  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$ .
6. Optional Subtask 5.1.

The Contractor shall provide a technical approach and cost estimate for the following work:

For the 2011 and 2028 inventories, create a separate Excel spreadsheet ranking  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$  emissions contributions for the point, on-road, non-road, and area source sectors from each county. Also, create an Excel spreadsheet ranking  $NO_x$  and  $SO_2$  emissions contributions for all anthropogenic source sectors combined from each county. Each spreadsheet shall contain:

- a. FIPSST.
- b. State.
- c. FIPSCNTY.
- d. County.
- e. 2011  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$  emissions.
- f. 2028  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$  emissions.
- g. Distance (km).
- h.  $Q/d$  for  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$ .
- i.  $Q/d^2$  for  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$ .
- j. Extinction-weighted residence time (EWRT)
- k.  $EWRT \cdot Q/d$  for  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$ .
- l. Fraction contribution for  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$ .
- m. Sum contribution for  $SO_2$  and  $NO_x$ .

G. Task 6. Air Quality Modeling.

1. Subtask 6.1. Modeling Protocol.

a. Modeling Domains.

i. Continental United States 12-Kilometer Domain.

For primary air quality modeling, the Contractor shall use the larger CONUS\_12 modeling domain depicted in Figure 2 that follows. This domain was used by EPA in its recent regional haze modeling efforts.

ii. VISTAS 12-Kilometer Domain.

For source apportionment tagging using PSAT, the Contractor shall use the smaller VISTAS\_12 modeling domain also depicted in Figure 2. (See Task 7 that follows.)

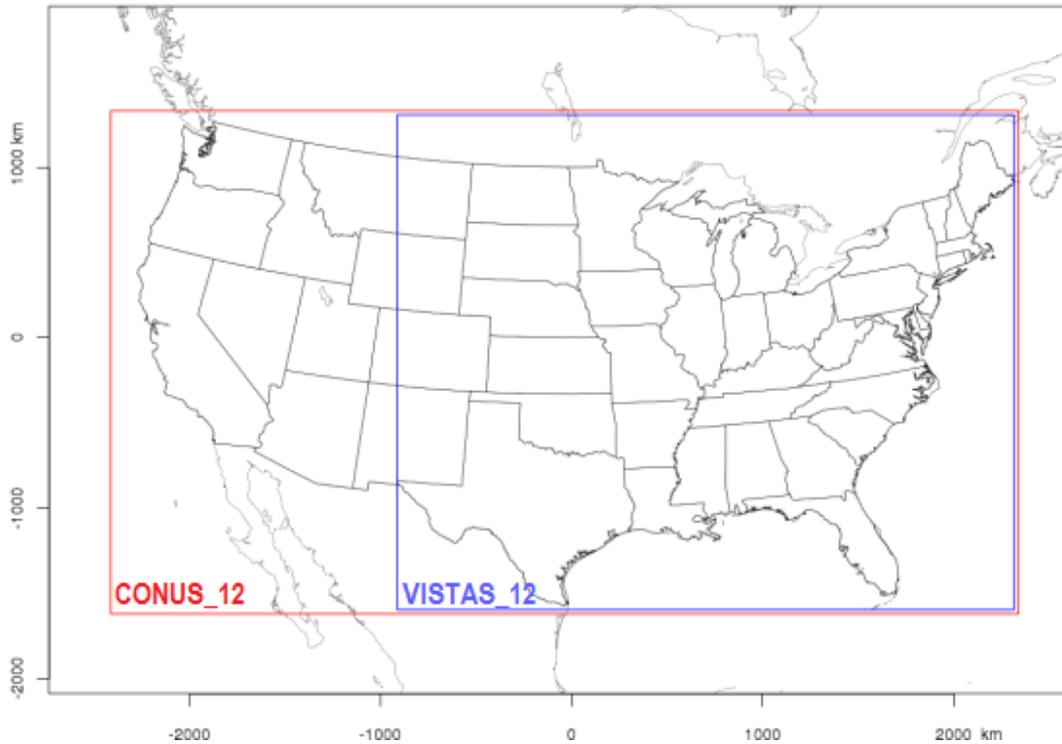


Figure 2. CONUS\_12 and VISTAS\_12 Modeling Domains.

iii. Below are additional modeling domain specifications.

- CONUS\_12 Domain
  - Columns: 396
  - Rows: 246
  - Vertical layers: 25
- VISTAS\_12 Domain
  - Columns: 269
  - Rows: 242
  - Vertical layers: 25

- b. The Contractor shall develop and submit to SESARM within sixty (60) days of contract execution a modeling protocol laying out the overall approach to the emissions and air quality modeling that will be conducted under this contract. References may be made where applicable to EPA documentation and protocols since the EPA modeling platform forms the basis of the modeling that will be conducted in this effort.
- c. The modeling protocol shall include but not be limited to all of the following, as applicable:
- i. the technical approach, including methodologies and techniques for thoroughly and efficiently evaluating emissions and air quality model output data, performance thresholds and metrics including but not limited to EPA's most current guidance on the use of models and other analyses for demonstrating attainment of air quality goals for regional haze, and recommended model configuration;
  - ii. the emissions processing methodology and data sources that will be used;
  - iii. gridding plans (e.g., temperatures used for biogenic, gridding surrogates, and speciation profiles);
  - iv. vegetation and land use data;
  - v. development of initial and boundary conditions;
  - vi. chemistry parameters and chemical mechanisms;

- vii. vertical diffusivities;
  - viii. computer resources;
  - ix. project schedule;
  - x. quality assurance procedures for each of the modeling subtasks identified in this RFP including accountability for correcting errors found through review and quality assurance activities; and
  - xi. an observational dataset to be used for model performance evaluation and additional analyses.
- d. The Contractor shall implement the methodologies and techniques described in the modeling protocol as approved to guide the evaluations for all modeling done under this RFP.
  - e. SESARM will provide a copy of the modeling protocol to EPA for review and feedback during the time that emission inventory preparation and processing are being completed.
  - f. The Contractor shall use 2011 WRF meteorology generated by the EPA for the CAMx modeling.
2. Subtask 6.2. 2011 Base Year Air Quality Modeling.
- a. The Contractor shall use the EPA 2011 modeling platform.
  - b. The Contractor shall benchmark CAMx with the CONUS\_12 domain using the latest version of CAMx against EPA's CONUS\_12 modeling results.
  - c. The Contractor shall replicate CAMx with the VISTAS\_12 domain using BCs from the CONUS\_12 modeling to support PSAT tagging.
  - d. The Contractor shall benchmark 2011 VISTAS\_12 model results against the 2011 CONUS\_12 model results.
3. Subtask 6.3. 2028 Projection Year Air Quality Modeling.
- a. The Contractor shall run the CAMx air quality model using the EPA 2028 projection year air quality modeling platform and SESARM's revised 2028 emissions with the CONUS\_12 modeling domain.
  - b. The Contractor shall replicate CAMx with the VISTAS\_12 domain using BCs from the CONUS\_12 modeling to support PSAT tagging.

- c. The Contractor shall benchmark 2028 VISTAS\_12 model results against the 2028 CONUS\_12 model results.

#### H. Task 7. Source Apportionment Tagging.

The Contractor shall perform PSAT source apportionment modeling with the 2028 VISTAS\_12 platform. The PSAT tags will be sulfate tags and/or nitrate tags and may include individual facilities and/or source categories by state. The receptors to be analyzed include all the Class I areas in the VISTAS\_12 modeling domain. The Contractor shall provide two (2) cost estimates, one for performing 100 PSAT tags and another for performing 250 PSAT tags.

#### I. Task 8. Model Performance Evaluation.

1. The following model performance statistics and graphics are requested for the 2011 CAMx modeling using data from the IMPROVE network.
  - a. For all IMPROVE monitors in the VISTAS\_12 domain, the Contractor shall use the current IMPROVE equation with monthly f(RH) values for both observed and modeled data.
  - b. The Contractor shall create a table of statistics including mean normalized bias, mean normalized gross error, mean observation, mean prediction, ratio of predicted to observed means, mean bias, normalized mean bias, mean fractional bias, mean error, normalized mean error, mean fractional error, and correlation coefficient. For each IMPROVE monitor in the VISTAS\_12 domain, present separate tables for total bext and speciated components of bext for 20% most impaired days/site and 20% best days/site.
2. Develop plots to demonstrate light extinction model performance graphically. The individual daily values used to perform these calculations shall be included in a single text file for each IMPROVE monitor in the VISTAS\_12 domain.
  - a. For each IMPROVE monitor in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create scatter plots of observed vs predicted total bext and speciated components of total light extinction (bext) for the 20% most impaired days/site and the 20% best days/site. Each scatter plot shall include the linear regression equation and  $r^2$  value.
  - b. For each IMPROVE monitor in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create bugle plots and soccer plots for total bext and speciated components of bext for the 20% most impaired days/site and the 20% best days/site.

- c. For each IMPROVE monitor in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create day-by-day stacked bar plots for total bext and speciated components of bext (observations vs. model) for the 20% most impaired days/site and the 20% best days/site.
  - d. For all VISTAS IMPROVE monitors in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create a site-by-site average stacked bar plot for total bext and speciated components of bext for the 20% most impaired days/site and the 20% best days/site.
  - e. For all non-VISTAS IMPROVE monitors in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create a site-by-site average stacked bar plot for total bext and speciated components of bext for the 20% most impaired days/site and the 20% best days/site.
3. Optional Subtask 8.1.

The Contractor shall provide a cost estimate for performing a model performance evaluation for weekly wet deposition and weekly dry deposition species collected in Optional Subtask 4.1. The Contractor shall propose model performance metrics to be evaluated.

J. Task 9. Future Year Model Projections.

1. For each IMPROVE monitor in the VISTAS\_12 domain, the Contractor shall calculate relative response factors (RRFs) and future year visibility (light extinction and deciviews) using EPA's SMAT tool for all simulations described in Task 6 (including the SO<sub>2</sub> PSAT simulations).
2. The Contractor shall generate glide slope graphics depicting progress towards goals for regional haze using the procedures identified and agreed to in the work plan developed in Task 1.3 for all simulations described in Task 6 (not including the SO<sub>2</sub> PSAT simulations).
3. Create the following stacked bar charts:
  - a. For each IMPROVE monitor in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create day-by-day stacked bar plots (2011 observations, 2011 model, 2028 model) for total bext and speciated components of bext for the 20% most impaired days/site and the 20% best days/site.
  - b. For all VISTAS IMPROVE monitors in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create a site-by-site average stacked bar plot (2011 observations, 2011 model, 2028 model) for total bext and speciated components of bext for the 20% most impaired days/site and the 20% best days/site.

- c. For all non-VISTAS IMPROVE monitors in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create a site-by-site average stacked bar plot (2011 observations, 2011 model, 2028 model) for total bext and speciated components of bext for the 20% most impaired days/site and the 20% best days/site.
  - d. For each IMPROVE monitor in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create day-by-day stacked bar plots for sulfate bext contribution for each tag for the 20% most impaired days/site.
  - e. For all VISTAS IMPROVE monitors in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create a site-by-site average stacked bar plot or sulfate bext contribution for each tag for the 20% most impaired days/site.
  - f. For all non-VISTAS IMPROVE monitors in the VISTAS\_12 domain, create a site-by-site average stacked bar plot or sulfate bext contribution for each tag for the 20% most impaired days/site.
4. As part of the process, the Contractor shall develop routines to place future year regional haze visibility projections (and the relevant intermediate files) on the technical web site described in Task 10.
5. Optional Subtask 9.1.

The Contractor shall provide a cost estimate for calculating relative response factors (RRFs) and future year projections of weekly wet deposition and weekly dry deposition species collected in Optional Subtask 4.1.

#### K. Task 10. Data Handling and Sharing.

- 1. Web/FTP Site Development.
  - a. The Contractor shall develop a technical web site for access by interested VISTAS participants and stakeholders. The web site will serve as the primary means for making available the substantial emissions and air quality modeling results, summaries, and other documentation.
  - b. The design of this technical web site shall incorporate a logical set of tools that will allow access to any of the graphical and statistical analyses generated throughout this project. All of the material posted to the technical web site shall be as directed by SESARM.
  - c. The Contractor shall develop routines to place model outputs on the web site after each run is complete, allowing SESARM to review the results in a timely manner. The Contractor shall notify SESARM when required information has been posted.

- d. The web site shall be structured and organized in a way that SESARM can acquire all files and duplicate the site on its own platform if desired or the Contractor shall propose an alternate method for posting and sharing project data. This will ensure SESARM can access the necessary data online as well as offline.
- e. The web site shall be further structured using compatible design and platform techniques that will allow for relatively simple transfer of its contents to the Metro 4/SESARM web site or another host site prior to expiration of the timeframe within which the Contractor shall maintain the web site prescribed herein.

## 2. Data Transfer and Archival.

- a. Respondents shall address in their proposals how they will assure seamless transfer of data between themselves, other SESARM contractors if applicable, and state, local, and tribal agencies. The selected Contractor shall work effectively and, if applicable, with other contractors responsible for other project tasks to assure the highest level of quality and efficiency that can be accomplished within the project. This will require the implementation of an efficient method, such as a FTP site, for transferring large datasets. The Contractor may be asked to transfer all emissions and photochemical grid model inputs/outputs as well as model setups to individual SESARM agencies upon request.
- b. The Contractor shall coordinate with SESARM to ensure that all emissions and air quality modeling data will be archived in agreed-upon formats.

## L. Task 11. Other Potential Tasks.

The tasks outlined in this RFP may not include all of the project work needed by SESARM to assist the member states in developing regional haze SIPs. Cost estimates for any such additional tasks will be requested as needed. The costs associated with any additional tasks will be negotiated between SESARM and the Contractor as the tasks are defined.

## **VII. SCHEDULE.**

SESARM seeks proposals from bidders that conform to the following schedule. If this schedule is deemed unattainable, bidders may propose alternative processes and procedures and/or alternative dates as long as justifications are provided. SESARM emphasizes the need to complete this work by July 31, 2019 and reserves the right to reject any bid that does not incorporate the July 31, 2019 project deliverable deadline.

A. Administrative Schedule.

The following schedule is projected for administrative actions SESARM will take leading up to and including contract execution:

1. Deadline for proposals – January 26, 2018.
2. Complete contractor selection process and notify winning bidder – February 15, 2018.
3. Complete negotiation of contract – March 2, 2018.

B. Technical Project Schedule.

The following schedule requests a total project timeframe of sixteen (16) months. Within this schedule is approximately two (2) months for work plan and QAPP development and approval, eight (8) months for completion of all technical work, and six (6) months for completion of all deliverables and reports.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.3	Contractor completes and submits project work plan to SESARM – Within 14 days of contract execution.	03/16/18
1.4	Contractor completes and submits QAPP to SESARM and EPA – Within 14 days of contract execution.	03/16/18
N/A	SESARM and EPA review draft QAPP and SESARM transmits comments to Contractor – Within two weeks of receipt of draft QAPP.	03/30/18
1.4	Contractor makes edits and completes and submits revised draft QAPP – Within one week of receipt of comments from SESARM.	04/06/18
N/A	EPA reviews revised draft QAPP and gives go-ahead to start signature process – Within one week of receipt of revised draft.	04/13/18
1.4	Signature process is completed by all parties – Estimated two weeks from EPA acceptance of QAPP language.	04/27/18
N/A	Technical work begins – Within one week of formal notification by SESARM.	05/04/18
5.1	Completion of modeling protocol	05/02/18
2	Completion of emission inventory work	06/01/18
3	Completion of emission processing work	07/01/18
4	Completion of data acquisition	06/01/18
5	Completion of area of influence analysis	09/01/18
6.2	Completion of air quality modeling work (2011)	09/01/18
6.3	Completion of air quality modeling work (2028)	12/01/18
7	Completion of source apportionment tagging	04/01/19

8	Completion of model performance evaluation	10/01/18
9	Completion of future year model projections	12/31/18
<b>N/A</b>	<b>Completion of all deliverables and reports</b>	<b>06/30/19</b>

**VIII. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS.**

A. Proposal Submittal Deadline.

In order to be guaranteed consideration, proposals shall be submitted to SESARM and received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Friday, January 26, 2018. SESARM reserves the right to reject proposals received after the prescribed day and time.

B. Number of Copies and Proposal Format.

Bidders shall submit to SESARM one paper copy and one electronic copy of their respective technical proposal and cost proposal in Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and/or Adobe Portable Document Format as appropriate. Required copies shall be sent via regular mail and e-mail to the following SESARM representative:

John E. Hornback, Executive Director, Southeastern States Air Resource Managers, Inc., 205 Corporate Center Dr Ste F, Stockbridge, GA 30281-7383. E-mail: [hornback@metro4-sesarm.org](mailto:hornback@metro4-sesarm.org).

C. Proposal Content.

Bidders are cautioned to carefully follow the requirements of this RFP in preparation of bids in order that submitted proposals will contain as much consistency and comparability as possible. A respondent may submit a partial proposal that addresses specific tasks and clearly states for which tasks a response is not provided.

Responses to this RFP shall contain, at a minimum, the following components:

1. Transmittal Letter.

A transmittal letter shall be submitted with a proposal and shall include the name, address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address for all primary and secondary contacts for the proposal. The proposal shall be submitted by an authorized representative whose signature on the transmittal letter shall serve to certify the accuracy of the proposal and all attachments and appendices and the commitment of the bidding entity to fulfill the requirements of the project.

## 2. Title Page.

The proposal shall contain a title page referencing the title and date of the RFP, the date of the proposal, and respondent information.

## 3. Technical Proposal.

The entire technical proposal shall be no more than fifty (50) single spaced pages, not counting attachments and appendices. The technical proposal shall follow the project task outline in Section VI. of this RFP and shall describe the proposed approach for accomplishing each task. The technical proposal shall include a brief abstract with a summary of qualifications, a list of key personnel, and a description of the proposed general approach. A proposed schedule for completing the project tasks shall be included in the technical proposal.

## 4. Cost Proposal.

- a. The cost proposal shall be prepared and submitted to SESARM according to and including the following specifications:
  - i. The name of the RFP, the name of the bidder, and the date of the proposal;
  - ii. The projected cost of each task and, where applicable, the projected cost of each subtask;
  - iii. A list of investigators with itemized costs including salary, fringe benefits, other direct costs, and indirect costs attributed to each investigator; and
  - iv. The projected total cost of all services the bidder is committing to provide to the project.
- b. The bidder shall specify the type of contract preferred.
- c. The bidder shall specify any special financial conditions associated with the technical and cost proposals.
- d. The bidder shall submit the cost proposal in a separate document from the technical proposal in order to give SESARM the opportunity, if it so chooses, to review the technical proposal first without knowledge of or consideration of the cost proposal.

5. Respondent Qualifications.

The proposal shall outline relevant capabilities and experience. More detailed descriptions of qualifications and references shall be appended to the proposal. This appended information shall include a summary description of previous work performed by key personnel including the name of the entity for which the work was performed as well as a client contact person familiar with the quality of the deliverable.

6. Key Personnel.

The respondent shall provide a listing of key personnel who will be assigned to contribute substantially to completion of the project. Included shall be each individual's name, job title, specific project work for which the individual will be responsible, and any specialized abilities that each person would bring to the project. Resumes may be appended to the proposal.

7. Reporting Commitment.

The proposal shall contain a commitment to submit concise but informative progress reports outlining work tasks associated with each invoice.

8. Certificate Related to Debarment and Suspension.

A signed certification shall be submitted with the proposal indicating that the respondent is not debarred or suspended from receiving payments utilizing federal funds. See Attachment 1 for the required certification form.

D. Deficient Proposals.

Failure of a respondent to comply with all submission requirements shall be cause for SESARM, at its sole discretion, to disqualify the proposal. SESARM will give primary consideration to proposals from individuals, corporations, and other qualified entities meeting the terms and conditions of this RFP and demonstrating adequate experience in the development of state and/or regional emissions inventories.

E. Proposal Submission and Contract Negotiation Costs.

Expenses for preparing project proposals as well as negotiating, drafting, and executing the final contract shall be solely the responsibility of the respondent.

F. Proposal Ownership.

Once submitted, proposals shall become the property of SESARM.

## G. Inquiries.

Inquiries regarding RFP requirements, project expectations, and other related information shall be directed to SESARM. If potential bidders have substantive questions that affect their ability to produce a credible and accurate proposal, any such questions shall be provided to SESARM in writing by January 5, 2018. SESARM shall respond expeditiously to such inquiries and reserves the right to compile bidder questions and issue responses for distribution to all bidders.

## IX. PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES.

SESARM shall entertain proposals from all respondents eligible for cost reimbursement with federal funds and proven to have experience in emissions inventory development, emissions processing, air quality modeling, and other assessments prescribed herein. SESARM reserves the right to reject any proposal containing components that are substantially inconsistent with any of the requirements set forth in this RFP.

Proposals will be evaluated as to responsiveness to the full range of services requested and conditions specified in this RFP. SESARM may choose to hire more than one contractor for this project. SESARM may choose to award a contract for individual or multiple components of this RFP or in its entirety.

The ability of a respondent to perform the tasks outlined in this RFP shall be determined based upon an evaluation of the respondent's technical proposal, the completeness and clarity of the contents of the proposal, and the relevance of the information provided with respect to the criteria in this RFP.

While this project requires strong technical skills, SESARM shall also give weight to communication skills to ensure that the project results can be conveyed to policy makers, stakeholders, and, if necessary, the public, in a satisfactory manner.

### A. Proposal Evaluation Criteria.

SESARM shall evaluate each technical proposal based upon the following criteria:

1. Technical conformance with the goals of the project including a demonstrated understanding of project objectives, a credible approach to accomplishing the objectives, completeness in addressing technical objectives, a realistic but aggressive product delivery schedule, use of existing efforts and programs where available and appropriate, clarity of the proposal, and other relevant factors at the discretion of SESARM.

2. Depth of knowledge and experience in meteorological, air quality and emissions modeling.
3. Demonstrated ability to work cooperatively with other contractors, governmental agencies, business/industry stakeholders, academia, and the general public.
4. Allocation to the project of more highly qualified senior staff versus support staff.
5. Costs including total projected costs, hourly rates, hours per task, fringe and other overhead costs, travel costs, and any special costs. Please note that the federal government limits its participation in payment of individual consultant rates per 40 CFR 30.27(b). If consultant services are procured without adequate competition, salary rates are limited to the equivalent of Level 4 of the federal Executive Series. This regulation could potentially apply to this project and, if so, SESARM will be required to conform to this cost limitation.
6. Other pertinent factors at the discretion of SESARM.

B. Process and Sequence of Proposal Review.

SESARM shall identify and convene a Selection Committee which will develop final proposal evaluation criteria. After completion of the review of proposals, recommendations will be provided to the SESARM Board of Directors and other participating agencies for approval. Upon final approval of the selected Contractor, bidders will be notified of the outcome of the selection process and work on the contract and scope of work will begin.

C. General Procurement Provisions and Conditions.

1. SESARM reserves the right not to award any contract based on this RFP.
2. At the conclusion of the selection process, SESARM may provide information on the strengths and weaknesses of an individual proposal to that respective respondent. Except as required by applicable federal and/or state regulations, SESARM shall not be obligated to provide more detailed information including contractor selection scoring sheets or other information relative to the relative weightings of the proposals. SESARM will not provide copies of proposals received pursuant to this RFP to any entity other than official representatives of SESARM and EPA except as required by federal and/or state regulations.

## **X. GENERAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS.**

### **A. Conformance with Federal Requirements.**

Funds for this project are federal funds from EPA. No entity shall provide a proposal in response to this RFP unless it is in conformance with contractor requirements applicable to federally-funded projects and unless the respondent can assure performance consistent with all applicable federal requirements.

### **B. Data in Public Domain.**

All project information and data delivered by the selected Contractor pursuant to this RFP shall be in the public domain.

### **C. Signature and Certification of Proposal.**

The signature on the cover transmittal letter of any submitted proposal shall signify agreement and compliance with all requirements set forth in this RFP except where specifically noted in the response. Said signature shall also represent and warrant that the information has been checked for errors and omissions, that the costs stated in the proposal are correct and as intended, that the cost information is complete and correct for performing the work and furnishing the labor, supplies, and materials to complete the tasks, and that the firm has the staff and resources available to perform the tasks within the schedule quoted.

### **D. Right to Contact Bidders.**

SESARM reserves the right to contact any bidder in order to clarify any point in a response or to obtain further information needed to evaluate a particular response. SESARM also reserves the right to contact companies and names supplied in connection with descriptions of previous work. Once the criteria for contract award are applied to each proposal, certain respondents may be asked to make an oral presentation or demonstration before SESARM for additional clarification.

### **E. Indemnification.**

The issuance of this RFP and the receipt of proposals in response to this request shall not, in any way, cause SESARM or its representatives to incur any liability, financial or otherwise. SESARM is the legal entity that will select the winning proposal and award the Contract. Any expenses incurred as a result of formulating a response to this request are the sole responsibility of the applicant. SESARM and its representatives assume no obligation to reimburse or in any way compensate any respondent for expenses incurred in connection with their response to this request.

F. Use and Disclosure of Information.

Any response to this RFP shall become the property of SESARM and as such, may be distributed to SESARM and its member agencies to the extent required by the RFP review process. Proposals and selection process documents pursuant to this RFP shall not be shared with individuals outside SESARM except to the extent required by law. The final Contract, if one is executed, along with any final work products completed pursuant to said Contract, shall be considered in the public domain and will be shared upon request with individuals outside SESARM as required by federal and state laws.

G. Ownership of Results.

Results of SESARM-supported work shall reside in the public domain. Anticipated results subject to this paragraph shall include but not be limited to data, coding, databases developed or improved with SESARM support, reports, and other materials developed as a part of any contract that result from this RFP. SESARM recognizes that any raw data generated outside SESARM but used to generate inputs to SESARM efforts shall not be covered by this ownership clause and shall remain in the domain of the data stewards that supply the inputs to SESARM and/or its contractor(s). SESARM will define the specific project files that need to be provided.

H. Billing Frequency.

Billing as a result of any contract executed pursuant to this RFP shall occur on a frequency of no more than once per calendar month and no less than once per calendar quarter basis unless otherwise authorized or required by SESARM.

I. Conflict of Interest Policy.

No person or organization shall enjoy any preference in performing work for SESARM by virtue of being an active member of SESARM or a participant in a SESARM-sponsored project. Any potential or actual conflict of interest by anyone associated with any proposal shall be disclosed in the proposal. This provision shall apply to prospective bidders, the selected Contractor, and all employees, officers, and other representatives of SESARM.

J. Expenditure Authorizations.

This RFP solicits proposals assuming purchase of services on a time and materials basis. Reimbursement will be made for services rendered under specific task authorizations. Work outside any agreed-upon scope of work will be allowed only after written approval by the Contract Officer.

K. Project Budget and Funding.

The scope of work defined in this RFP may extend across multiple funding years and potentially over multiple grant cycles. SESARM funding for this project in future years is uncertain, and SESARM reserves the right to fund some, but not all, tasks described in this RFP. SESARM further reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to terminate this project and any contracts in force due to a lack of available funding.

L. Disadvantaged Business Services.

SESARM is obligated to conform to the disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) provisions of 40 CFR Part 33, Subpart C. Contracts executed pursuant to this RFP shall contain provisions requiring contractors to:

1. Make DBEs aware of subcontracting and procurement opportunities within this project.
2. Make information available to DBEs on forthcoming opportunities to participate in provision of needed services.
3. Consider subcontracting with a consortium of DBEs when a contract is too large for a single DBE to properly service.
4. Use the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce to gain knowledge on how to better allow DBEs to compete for services needed to support this project.

**XI. PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES – SESARM.**

- A. SESARM shall hold meetings and/or conference calls with the selected bidder to finalize and execute a contract describing the expectations of the project and the responsibilities of the Contractor and SESARM.
- B. The Contract Officer for SESARM shall be John E. Hornback, Executive Director. The Contract Officer will oversee the project consistent with the expectations of SESARM and its participating agencies. Input will be sought from southeastern agency representatives who will provide review and recommendations on methods, assumptions, conclusions, and interpretations. Stakeholders will provide review as requested by SESARM.

- C. SESARM may schedule and host up to two project workshops at locations in the Southeast to deliver information and updates to participating agencies and stakeholders. SESARM shall bear the cost hosting cost of any such workshops. Contractor travel expenses to such workshops shall be billable to SESARM provided that it is consistent with the Contractor's accepted bid. In lieu of project workshops, SESARM may choose to conduct all outreach to participating agencies and stakeholders via teleconference and/or webinar.