



DATE: August 23, 2013
TO: All Potential Vendors
FROM: Jolena Missildine, RFI Coordinator
SUBJECT: VENDOR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
Amendment 2 for ACQ-2013-0801-RFI NPDES Stormwater Monitoring
Analytical Laboratory Services

Executive Summary:

This document is prepared by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and shall serve as the sole official reply to Vendor Questions submitted in response to ACQ-2013-0801-RFI released on August 1, 2013. Questions and responses are numbered for ease of reference only and are in no particular order or priority. Questions and comments have generally been stated as they were received except that some questions have been modified to maintain vendor confidentiality or to reduce redundancies. The answers may only explain or clarify some aspect that is already addressed in the RFI. It is important that Vendors review all questions and answers.

Vendor Questions and Official Answers

1. **QUESTION:** If a laboratory does not analyze for all the methods or all the analytes listed in the Appendix A tables, will a response be acceptable if it only includes details for the methods/analysts the laboratory performs?

ANSWER: Yes this is acceptable. Identification of subcontractors, who can perform remaining analyses, is also encouraged.

2. **QUESTION** Why isn't DOT waiting to use the WA State contract which will result from the current RFQQ #02413?

ANSWER: This RFI is for information only; WSDOT may choose to do its own a competition that will include the approved vendors from State Master Contract 02413.

3. **QUESTION** Can you provide Appendix B in Word or Excel format for editing?

ANSWER: Yes, see amended ACQ-2013-0801-RFI.

4. **QUESTION** It is clear from Section 1.1 and Section 3.7 of the RFI that this RFI will not result in a contract award, but is just a request for information. Will any laboratory selection be based on the results of this RFI, even if a contract is not awarded?

ANSWER: No, this RFI is for information only to determine how laboratory contracting will proceed for WSDOT's stormwater monitoring project during the 13-15 biennium. See the answer to question #2.

5. **QUESTION** Appendix C. 1.B.5.b. Are LODs acceptable in lieu of MDLs?

ANSWER: Yes, as long as the LODs are developed in accordance with proper protocols.

6. **QUESTION** Appendix C. 1.B.5.a. Are full curves required for all target compounds?

ANSWER: Not certain about the point of this question. As a general statement herein, initial calibrations should be performed fully in compliance with the method requirements for all target analytes. To clarify the statement in Appendix C. 1.B.5.a., the practical quantitation limits for organic analyses should be at or above the lowest ICAL point as a minimum requirement. The same value is to be entered in the "Practical_quantitation_limit" column in the EDD.

7. **QUESTION** 4.7.g. For rush TATs, are preliminary data acceptable?

ANSWER: No. Analytical results submitted to WSDOT on a regular or rush TATs should go through full internal QA/QC procedures and submit to WSDOT as a final laboratory report.

8. **QUESTION** 4.5. Are alternate accreditations such as ISO acceptable substitutions for NELAP or WDOE?

ANSWER: In general, the minimum laboratory certification WSDOT would accept for an analytical method for this program is the WDOE accreditation, if the analytical method is part of the WDOE accreditation program. For analytical method(s) not included in the NELAP or WDOE accreditation, identify the method(s) in your proposal as a variance. WSDOT will evaluate the variance on a case-by-case basis.

9. **QUESTION** 4.5. For work that is not done in-house, is subcontracting mandatory? Or can those line items be "No Bid"?

ANSWER: There are no mandatory requirements. This RFI is for information only. However, WSDOT encourages the identification of subcontractors who can perform the remaining analyses.

10. **QUESTION** Will WSDOT ever have a need to report data to WDOE's EIM database?

ANSWER: The answer is unknown. EIM data submittal isn't currently required by WSDOT's 2009 NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit.

11. **QUESTION** Page 40, Table D-4: The reporting_detection_limit field is listed as optional. However under its comment, it says "... Required for all results for which such a limit is appropriate."

- i. So is this field "optional" or "conditionally required"?
- ii. If it is changed to "conditionally required" can you define what is meant by "... all results for which such a limit is appropriate"?

The "comment" for this field starts off defining this very like the definition of a PQL. However it is likely that the EQUIS data base creators meant this to be whatever number the lab is reporting as the "lab's reporting limit" and that the next row in Table D-4 (Reporting Detection Limit Type) would define what the "lab's reporting limit" to be. Possible options would be:

1. MDL
2. PQL
3. Contract Limit
4. Regulatory Limit
5. IDL
6. Etc.

ANSWER:

i. This field is required for almost all analyses conducted in this program, given that the majority of the analyses required in this program should define and report the quantitation limits for the target analytes, with few exceptions such as pH analysis.

ii. Yes, it is correct as stated in the question.

12. **QUESTION** Page 29, C. 3. "Original sample preparation..."

- i. Would a copy of the original worksheet suffice? Our extraction books are bound based upon WDOE's audit recommendations. It would be therefore difficult to give WSDOT the original document.

ANSWER: A copy of the original worksheet suffices, as long as the printing is legible.

13. **QUESTION** Will WSDOT use an EQUIS data checker on the EDD files prior to them being uploaded into the WDSOT database? If so will the lab be given a copy of the checker so that all files could be pre-checked prior to delivery?

ANSWER: WSDOT will use EQUIS Data Processor software to check and upload EDD files to EQUIS. Problematic EDDs are rejected and flagged for specific errors, facilitating correction. Automatic notifications will then be provided to the data submitter. WSDOT has purchased a limited number of software licenses and copy of this program cannot be provided.

14. **QUESTION** Page 33, Table D-2. How many EDD files for your database need to be created per SDG? Is it one EDD file per each table (A-3, A-4 and A-5) listed in Table D-2?

ANSWER: One EDD file is to be created per SDG. One EDD file will contain the information in all of the tables.

15. **QUESTION** Page 27, 7c. "If QC samples are reanalyzed, these results need to be clearly identified as such." Also p. 36, Table D-4, test_type.

Our database stores one result per analysis and we therefore report out only one result per analysis, regardless if it was the initial analytical run or a different subsequent run. So is it really necessary given that you would receive just one result per sample/analysis that we would need to flag it as an initial or reanalysis?

ANSWER: The result pages (namely form-1s) can combine the initial and dilution analyses or re-analysis into one set of results for analyses with multiple analytes (e.g., PAHs). However, the exact sample preparation (extraction) and analysis dates should be clearly identified in the Form-1s for each analyte.

16. **QUESTION** 4.5. For work that is not done in-house, is subcontracting mandatory? Or can those line items be "No Bid"?

ANSWER: Subcontracting is not mandatory. However, it is encouraged. Please see answers to Questions # 1 and 9.

17. **QUESTION** Achieving a 0.1 ug/L reporting limit for Copper requires Clean Hands/Dirty Hands sampling techniques. Will WDOT use those techniques to sample Total and Dissolved Copper? [Table A-5, p. 14, Metals]

ANSWER: A modified clean hands/dirty hands technique is used to collect metals samples and is detailed in WSDOT's field sampling standard operating procedures.

18. **QUESTION** If samples contain metals concentrations of copper greater than 0.4 ug/L (our routine detection limit for copper) could we report this detection limit as opposed to the 0.1 ug/L limit? [Table A-5, p. 14, Metals]

ANSWER: Yes, based on the data collected in the past, total and dissolved copper concentrations in program samples were significantly greater than 0.4 ug/L. In any case that the sample concentration is approaching the detection limit, WSDOT may evaluate the data more closely and may request for a lower detection limit or qualify the result as estimated.

19. **QUESTION** If samples contain dissolved mineral concentrations (Ca, Mg, and Na) greater than 0.100 mg/L (our routine detection limit for these minerals) could we report this detection limits as opposed to the 0.025 mg/L limits? [Table A-5, p. 14, Metals]

ANSWER: Yes

20. **QUESTION** Our zinc method detection limit is 0.5 ug/L. Our zinc PQL is 2.5 ug/L. May we report data less than your required reporting limit of 5.0 ug/L for zinc? [Table A-5, p. 14, Metals]

ANSWER: Yes

21. **QUESTION** This situation will apply to a variety of analytes (our detection and PQL limits being less than your specified reporting limits). Can we report data to you lower than your specified reporting limit in those cases?

ANSWER: Yes

22. **QUESTION** What type of metals filters does WSDOT use? (capsule, disk, syringe or other)

ANSWER: WSDOT uses 0.45 micrometer bottle top vacuum glass fiber filters.

23. **QUESTION** It is unlikely that samples from Spokane would make it to the Puget Sound area within 6 hours of collection. Assuming this is true; could WSDOT send those samples directly to the “subcontracting” laboratory rather than sending them to the primary laboratory first? [Table A-3, p. 10]

ANSWER: Yes

24. **QUESTION** Who ships and pays for the samples return to the laboratory for analysis?

ANSWER: At this time the answer is unknown and multiple options are available. WSDOT is requesting information about options and services provided by each laboratory. If courier service is available and/or there is a charge for courier service, please identify. If courier service is unavailable, please identify desired shipping options.

25. **QUESTION** What are the requirements for reagent water being shipped to them? How frequently? Lead time? How much water?

ANSWER: Reagent water will be shipped in one gallon glass jars with Teflon lined lid. Rinsate blanks are usually run closer to the end of the season. Depending on estimated holding time of the water, reagent water can be provided over a period of time. The lead time for special requests of smaller amounts of reagent water will be at 2 days. The total amount for one season is estimated to be 80-90 gallons of water.

26. **QUESTION** Beyond the “Maximum Annual Total” counts listed in Tables A-1, A-2, A-3 and A-4, can you provide any additional information on how many sampling events those totals represent?

ANSWER: A new table has been added to the RFI. See Table 5 in the amended RFI document.

27. **QUESTION** For example: Table A-4, p. 12, How many events do the “6 Annual Phthalate” samples represent? Six deliveries of one sample each throughout the year, one delivery of six samples once per year or something in between?

ANSWER: A total of 6 sediment samples are collected at about the same time each year. The 6 samples may or may not be included in a single, annual delivery to the lab.

28. **QUESTION** How many samples are expected to be collected annually from each location? For example, how many of each sample type are expected to be collected in King County vs. Spokane County, etc.

ANSWER: A new table has been added to the RFI. See Table 5 in the amended RFI document.

29. **QUESTION** Will samples be collected, shipped and/or delivered to the lab on weekends?

ANSWER: Yes. Although WSDOT’s normal work week ends on Friday at noon, monitoring may be required on weekends to meet the permit-required number of sampled storms.

30. **QUESTION** All of our tests are accredited by the Washington Department of Ecology. May this substitute for NELAC accreditation? (p. 5, (b)). We have done all of the sampling and lab testing required by King County’s NPDES Stormwater permit.

ANSWER: Yes

31. **QUESTION** Must QC be done on WSDOT samples in every batch? In other words if WSDOT are in a batch with samples for other projects and customers, can the QC be done on other samples?

ANSWER: Yes. However, WSDOT requires that the accuracy and precision data not based on the analysis of non-program samples. In order to provide sufficient analytical precision and accuracy data where the QC analyses were not performed on a WSDOT’s program sample, WSDOT expects that duplicate analysis on a laboratory control sample (or SRM) be performed and the recovery (for both LCS and LCSD) and RPD values be reported for the preparation batch. Program sample-specific QC analyses are required for this program, and the analyses will be requested by WSDOT during the course of the monitoring. In these cases, WSDOT will collect sufficient sample volumes and identify the sample designated for QC analyses (i.e., MS/MSD or replicate analyses) on the COC form. It is then becomes a requirement for the laboratory to perform the QC analyses on the designated sample. The cost for the QC analyses requested under this condition can be charged as individual samples (e.g., charged as two samples for a set of MS/MSD analyses on one program sample).

32. **QUESTION** May we substitute our own statistically derived QC control limits for most organic parameters provided we stay within the 30 (LCL), 100 (min UCL) and 150 (max UCL) values as described in footnote [13] on page 18?

ANSWER: Yes

33. **QUESTION** May the required “Reporting Limit (RL)” fall between the lab MDL and PQL?

ANSWER: Yes

34. **QUESTION** Method Blank Flagging p. 28 (9.e). Our policy regarding method blank flagging differs from what is in the RFI. Would the following policy be acceptable?

We flag with a B any sample parameter which had reported results in its associated method blank if there was a reported value in the sample within 10x the amount in the blank. Therefore:

- a) Parameters detected in the method blank and not in an associated sample would not be flagged.
- b) Parameters detected >10x the amount found in the blank would not be flagged.
- c) In cases both cases i. and ii., the method blank would receive a B flag for all parameters above the MDL.
- d) It is our policy to report as few B flags as possible and to take corrective action whenever possible.

ANSWER: Yes, this flagging policy for method blank detections is acceptable.