



*Founded in 1928, the Water Environment Federation (WEF) is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 33,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world. WEF members, Member Associations and staff proudly work to achieve our mission to provide bold leadership, champion innovation, connect water professionals, and leverage knowledge to support clean and safe water worldwide. To learn more, visit [www.wef.org](http://www.wef.org).*

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) is requesting a proposal (RFP) from qualified firms (herein known as awardee) for a “Needs Assessment Study” for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)<sup>1</sup> Permittees within the United States, Territories and Tribal Communities. A description of the services needed and other pertinent information follow:

### **The Water Environment Federation (WEF), its Stormwater Focused Programs and Services, and the “MS4 Permitted Community”**

One of the key strategic focus areas for WEF is the growing field of stormwater management, as noted in our organizational [Strategic Goals and Objectives](#). WEF is committed to developing new tools and resources for stormwater managers to meet the substantial challenges within this sector. WEF has a number of programs, products and services focused on stormwater. These include:

- the [WEF Stormwater Institute](#)
- [Rainfall to Results: the Future of Stormwater](#)
- [MS4 Awards Program](#)
- [Stormwater Management Magazine](#)
- the [Stormwater Report](#)
- the [National Green Infrastructure Certification Program](#)
- the [Stormwater Testing & Evaluation for Products and Practices \(STEPP\) Initiative](#)
- Stormwater focused [online training courses](#) and publications
- Stormwater focused technical sessions as part of the annual Stormwater Congress at [WEFTEC](#)

WEF seeks to find the best strategies to ensure that the knowledge base and educational vehicles are of the highest quality for the staff responsible for managing stormwater systems. This is independent of whether WEF is actively engaged in direct activities (e.g. training, program implementation) of stormwater personnel.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this “MS4 Program Needs Assessment Study” is to provide needed, higher-level market data to help craft an overall strategy for WEF’s Stormwater Programs and the Stormwater Institute. WEF intends to use the results of this survey to develop programs and products to help fill the current gaps and meet the challenges the regulated stormwater community faces. In addition, WEF intends to issue two (2) reports resulting from the survey:

- A summary level report available to the public, and

- A more detailed report related to the specific needs of the stormwater sector that will be made available to the Stormwater Institute organizational members and key partners.

All proposals must be received no later than **5:00 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>**. Please see the project background, description, and submission instructions that follow for more details.

### **Background Information:**

Unlike the more experienced drinking water and wastewater focus areas, stormwater management permitting programs in the United States began in 1990. With generally less than 20 years of implementation experience, this relatively young sector is highly diverse. MS4 permit types are based on the community's population numbers and distinguished by large (>250,000), medium (100,000 – 249,999) and small (<100,000) sizes. Phase I Individual Permits are issued to large and medium size communities and Phase II General Permits are issued to small communities. Additionally, Phase II permits are issued to non-traditional permittees such as state and local transportation departments and universities.

There have been several informal surveys and focus groups relating to determining the needs of MS4 permittees. However, these surveys have been general in nature and focused on a limited geographic scope (i.e. a jurisdictional boundary and/or a specific watershed like the Chesapeake Bay). The focus of this study is to assess the needs of the regulated municipal and transportation stormwater sector and determine where resource gaps exist.

These past surveys and studies provide good sector information and data, but many are informal in nature and lack both the scientific design and statistical significance expected when adhering to survey research best practices. Weblinks regarding these studies are attached for your review as you prepare the proposal.

WEF has assembled a MS4 Survey Workgroup under the Stormwater Institute to provide sector expertise and help guide the development of the MS4 Needs Assessment Study. This workgroup will also serve as a review body for the outputs and reports generated from the selected awardee.

### **Scope:**

The scope of the "MS4 Needs Assessment Study" is described as follows:

1. The MS4 Survey Workgroup and WEF-appointed staff will provide direction to the awardee and will assist in developing the questions for populations study/survey.
2. Develop the methodology for generating the survey contact list – it is imperative that the questions be "tested" by a smaller focus group to ensure the correct type of data are being generated by the questions.
3. The target audience/participants for this study are stormwater permit managers within the United States, territories, and tribal lands.
4. The demographics of the survey will focus on the nature of the MS4 permit. MS4s range significantly in size (both in population and geography) as well as the type of services provided (meeting permit fundamentals, those with and without stormwater utility fee programs, etc.) and processes used. WEF wants to ensure that data gathered addresses the variety of the permitted communities, considering the various climates & physical locations, populations, and sizes. The MS4 permitted community is highly diverse and the needs of the sector varies due to this diversity.
5. The desire is to have the study and findings completed by second quarter of calendar year 2018.

**The desired deliverables and information to be collected via the Study includes:**

1. Synthesis of data from existing efforts; including those of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Stormwater Information Collection Request (ICR), Chesapeake Stormwater Network's Chesapeake Bay MS4 Needs Survey, materials shared by National Municipal Stormwater Network (NMSA) members, and other data sources identified by the WEF MS4 Survey Workgroup
2. Development of the MS4 permittee survey
3. Identification of potential survey respondents (including from EPA and other databases as well as permittees identified from state water pollution control administrators; WEF's Stormwater Institute Advisory Committee; WEF's Stormwater Committee; and other stormwater related committees, task forces, and groups)
4. Implementation of survey and data analysis
5. Production of two (2) reports summarizing the project scope, approach, findings, and any recommended next steps. As previously noted, one report will be a public summary while the second report will be a full report of the project findings.
6. Determine the current and projected (future) needs and challenges of MS4 communities in the United States, territories, and tribal lands to meet both permit requirements and community needs.

**The proposal should include the following:**

1. Proposed work plan of how the Study will be conducted. For example, will an online survey be conducted along with focus groups?
2. Itemized budget to include the cost of each activity/task to be conducted, any travel costs, and contingency costs.
3. Proposed schedule to include major milestones such as the review/testing of the questions before the study is officially conducted.
4. A description of the awardee's qualifications, experience, and description of similar projects. Provide a minimum of three current relevant projects, including client contact information for each project. *Weblinks only* to such project outputs are encouraged.

If warranted, a subsequent phase of research (*NOT within the scope of the current RFP*) could be pursued to fill critical data/information needs. Such an effort would be considered by WEF and the MS4 Survey Workgroup along with other types of linkage issues that could benefit from such an approach.

**Deliverables and Schedule**

- *Proposals are due to WEF on **July 25, 2017, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)***
- WEF anticipates making the award on **August 8, 2017**
- The awardee is expected to be available for a kickoff teleconference with the WEF MS4 Survey Workgroup in early **September 2017** to discuss respective roles, responsibilities, and expectations. During this meeting, a schedule will be determined for subsequent team meetings.
- The awardee will produce a draft report(s) and be available for a teleconference with the WEF MS4 Survey Workgroup in **March 2018** to receive comments and discuss the Draft Report.
- The final reports, incorporating any review comments from the MS4 Survey Workgroup and WEF, is due to WEF by **April 30, 2018**.

**Budget**

WEF anticipates the budget for this project to be in the \$40,000 to \$60,000 range.

## **Who May Apply:**

This RFP is open to all public, private, for-profit, and non-profit entities possessing the requisite experience for providing the services highlighted within the Scope. Applicants may be individuals, sole proprietors, professional consultants, institutions, or companies. Teams consisting of multiple entities are permitted to apply, with one entity designated as the lead.

Selection of proposals is a competitive process. Essential elements for awardee selection include:

- qualifications of awardee(s) including specific knowledge of the issue, prior work and experience in the subject area and interacting with volunteer committees;
- initial thoughts and a vision for what the approach would look like;
- a detailed scope of work;
- a commitment to complete the project within the proposed time period; and
- a reasonable and competitive budget

WEF may conduct interviews for this project and will contact awardees, as necessary, should additional information be needed. Once awardee selection has been made, all awardees submitting proposals will be notified.

## **Instructions for Submitting Proposals**

To respond to this RFP, please submit the following items as your proposal package:

- 1) Cover Sheet
- 2) Approach and Scope of Work
  - a. initial thoughts/vision for what the approach would look like and how it would be applied
  - b. state the objectives and detail the procedures that will be used by the awardee/team
- 3) Schedule and Deliverables
  - a. confirm your ability to meet the deliverable deadlines and availability to participate in a project kickoff teleconference in early September 2017.
- 4) Cost Proposal – costs for developing, executing, and reporting the MS4 Needs Survey results. Cost effectiveness of proposals will be considered during the review process.
  - a. include an estimated level of effort and hourly rate for each labor category proposed.
- 5) Qualifications of Key Team Members
  - a. describe relevant experience and demonstrated knowledge of the MS4 permit program and/or working with a volunteer review committee
  - b. supported by a 2-page resume for the project lead and for each of the other key team members

The proposal **may not exceed 5 pages** of single-spaced, 12-point text with one-inch margins, excluding cover sheet, budget spreadsheet, and resumes.

## ***Deadline***

**Proposals must be received electronically no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time July 25, 2017.**

The submission must include: one (1) electronic version of the proposal package by email to [stormwater@wef.org](mailto:stormwater@wef.org) with subject line to read **Proposal: MS4 Needs Assessment Survey**.

WEF will review proposals and notify all proposers of the outcome of the selection process with regards to their proposal. The review and selection process is anticipated to take about two weeks after the proposal deadline. WEF anticipates making the award on August 8, 2017.

All proposals are considered as privileged communications available only to WEF staff and volunteer personnel who have non-disclosure agreements with WEF.

### **Questions**

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted by e-mail to [stormwater@wef.org](mailto:stormwater@wef.org) with subject line to read Questions: MS4 Needs Assessment Survey by 5:00 p.m. EDT July 18, 2017. WEF will send a summary of answers to all interested respondents by 5:00 p.m. EDT July 20, 2017. WEF regrets that it cannot respond to questions individually.

### **WEF Policies and Contractual Conditions**

The following will apply to an eventual contract with WEF. If these policies and conditions cannot be met, then a proposal should not be submitted for consideration.

#### Legal and Financial Accountability

When the award is made, the awardee will negotiate a contract with WEF. The awardee will assume legal and financial accountability for the awarded funds and for performance of the supported activities. The proposer's organization is responsible for verifying the accuracy, validity, and conformity with the most current institutional guidelines of all administrative, fiscal, and technical information in the proposal. Deliberate withholding, falsification, or misrepresentation of information could result in actions including the suspension or termination of an award.

#### Copyrights

WEF requires assignment of all copyrights in the final report.

#### Acknowledgement

WEF requires formal acknowledgement in any subsequent presentations and/or publications of the materials contained in the report.

The following people will be managing the survey activities and will work with the awardee through the process:

- Chris French  
Director, Stormwater Programs
  
- Rebecca Arvin-Colón  
WEF Technical Programs Manager

Attachments/Web Links:

1. [EPA Stormwater Information Collection Request \(ICR\)](#)
2. [2016 Chesapeake Stormwater Network's MS4 Needs Survey Summary Results](#)
3. [2016 Center for Watershed Protection National MS4 Needs Survey](#)
4. [2014 Stormwater Utility Survey, Black & Veatch](#)
5. [Western Kentucky University Stormwater Utility Survey](#)
6. [MS4 Survey 2014, Comprehensive Environmental Inc.](#)
7. [2005 NPDES Stormwater Cost Survey, Office of Water Programs, California State University, Sacramento](#)
8. [2003 Orange County, CA Stormwater Survey Report](#)

Endnote(s):

1. Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Definition: An MS4 is a conveyance or system of conveyances that is owned by a state, city, town, village, tribal group, or other public entity that discharges to waters of the U.S. The conveyance system(s) is comprised of storm drains, pipes, ditches and other features designed and/or used to collect, treat, and/or convey stormwater generated as the result of rainfall or snow melt on the surrounding landscape. These systems are not part of a combined sewer system and do not discharge to a sewage treatment plant, or publicly owned treatment works (POTW). To prevent harmful pollutants from being washed or dumped into specific types of MS4s, operators might be required to obtain NPDES permits and develop stormwater management programs (SWMPs). In some states, a separate Transportation Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (TS4) permit has been established which recognizes the unique features of transportation corridors and limited space constraints within those linear systems. A TS4 is otherwise similar to a MS4.



**Responses to Questions  
for  
WEF Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Needs Assessment  
Request for Proposals**

The following is a list of questions and responses the Water Environment Federation (WEF) has received regarding the MS4 Needs Survey Request for Proposals (RFP). WEF responses are provided after the questions in *italicized font*.

**Commenter 1.**

1. What organizations or companies have been notified of this RFP, requested this RFP, or have received this RFP?

*WEF has posted the RFP to both [www.wef.org](http://www.wef.org) and [www.wefstormwaterinstitute.org](http://www.wefstormwaterinstitute.org) websites. In addition, the RFP was provided to firms who have responded to previous survey RFPs WEF has issued.*

*Generally speaking, we expect to receive responses from two types of firms:*

- *Environmental consulting firms with a history of conducting such surveys*
- *Firms who specialize in conducting surveys and marketing research*

*While we appreciate the interest expressed by this question, we are unable to provide information on which individual firms might respond to the RFP.*

2. What companies or entities are considered to be "Stormwater Institute organizational members and key partners"? What is the number of such companies or entities?

*A list of Stormwater Institute (SWI) organizational members is available at <http://bit.ly/2gNHKMb>. Key partners may include organizations and groups that WEF has past, current, and future formalized partnerships with, such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)s. A list of key partners has not been created as of this time.*

3. What is the current membership of the WEF Stormwater Institute?

*Please see <http://bit.ly/2gNHKMb> for up to date information regarding SWI member organizations.*

4. Who are the members of the "MS4 Survey Workgroup"? How many members does the Workgroup have?

*WEF regrets it is unable to provide specific details regarding the MS4 Survey Work Team composition, especially during the early stages of the RFP acceptance and review process.*

5. The RFP calls for a “kickoff teleconference” with the WEF MS4 Survey Workgroup and second teleconference to discuss the draft report.

- 5.a. Is it expected that all the interactions between the Contractor and the Workgroup will be done by teleconference and E-mail?

*WEF Response: It is anticipated the vast majority of interactions will occur via conference call and via email. However, the possibility exists that a physical meeting might occur during the project with the work team. The applicant is expected to offer their vision of whether such a meeting is necessary within their proposal.*

- 5.b. Is there an expected total number of teleconferences between the Contractor and the Workgroup?

*WEF Response: No. The applicant may choose to address this in their proposal if desired. However, the work team may help determine what the appropriate amount of interactions should be.*

- 5.c. If yes, what is that total number?

*WEF Response: Please see response to 5.b.*

- 5.d. Will each review, comment, and revision process of draft materials done in one iteration? Specifically, can the Contractor assume that, at a review step, there will be only one review, comment, and revise process?

*WEF Response: This has yet to be determined. It is envisioned that communications between the awardee and both WEF staff and the MS4 Survey work team will be ongoing throughout the project. An applicant should offer their vision on how this will be accomplished within their proposal.*

6. The project deliverables include “identification of potential survey respondents”.

- 6.a. Which of the following categories of people interested in and related to the MS4 permitting program should be included in this list of respondents:

- i. Permittee staff
  1. Phase I cities
  2. Phase II cities
  3. Townships, villages, etc.
  4. Counties
  5. DOTs
  6. Other non-traditional permittees (universities, hospitals, prisons, watershed districts, etc.)
- ii. Consultants working for permittees
- iii. National regulators
- iv. State regulators
- v. Interested NGOs (national and state-level)
- vi. Vendors of equipment and/or services

*WEF Response: This survey will focus on entities that are issued MS4 permits by a designated regulatory body (either the US Environmental Protection Agency or a delegated authority state/regional regulatory body). The survey will not include outside stakeholders such as MS4 permit issuers (regulatory bodies), consultants (in general), NGOs, equipment vendors and others. A MS4 permittee may choose to have a consultant provide survey responses on their behalf.*



- 6.a. What is the project “goal” for the percentage of individuals in each of the categories listed above that will receive the survey? For example, what is the target percentage of the 7,555 MS4 permittees that should receive the survey and have an opportunity to respond?

*WEF Response: The applicant should offer their vision for what an appropriate survey participant rate should be. The successful proposal will stipulate how the survey will adhere to survey research best practices, be scientifically valid, and demonstrate statistical significance and confidence.*

- 6.b. In seeking contact information for potential survey respondents (MS4 permittees) from EPA and states, requests for information could originate from either the Contractor or WEF. It seems reasonable to expect that the probabilities for positive responses to such requests would be more favorable if the requests come from WEF. Is WEF willing and able to be the origin of such information requests?

*WEF Response: WEF would be willing to consider being the point of contact for potential requests for information regarding MS4 permittee contacts, should it be necessary. The project awardee will be expected to assemble all information to support this request(s) and compile the information into a meaningful format/database upon receipt. The proposal should specify how this will be accomplished and what role the contractor will have in supporting this task. A proposal could potentially include both options and include a line item in the budget specific to this task.*

## **Commenter 2.**

### **Scope:**

1. Point 2 indicates that the awardee will have to develop the methodology for generating the survey contact list. Does this mean that WEF will not be providing a list of contacts/members for use in the survey?

*WEF Response: WEF has some contacts to provide, but they will need to be supplemented by a larger industry list. We understand that we may need to contract to an additional vendor (fitting within our overall budget), but ideally, the vendor conducting the survey would have the ability to work with that task as well.*

2. Point 2 indicates that questions need to be tested by a focus group. Are you requiring a qualitative focus group or a pilot test of the survey?

*WEF Response: Either. This is a strategy we'll want to develop early on. We would be looking for advice from our survey vendor on how to best proceed given the content and goals of the survey. This points to our overall requirement that our volunteer subject matter experts (via the MS4 Survey Work Group) are involved and integrated within the project.*

3. Point 4 indicates an extensively diverse sample of MS4 Permit areas. Will you provide a general breakdown of the various climates, locations, populations, etc.?

*WEF Response: WEF will be able to work with the awardee to determine how to accurately reflect the diversity of the MS4 permit community in the U.S.*

*Generally speaking, climatic factors are a function as to how a regulated municipality will implement stormwater best practices in their respective communities. For example, a*

*municipality in an arid region will rely on different best stormwater control measure types versus those used in a temperate region. Areas with cold climates (e.g. upper Midwest and Northeast US) may also have different management approaches vs. warmer areas with greater plant growing seasons. Permit types (Phase I & II) are the highest-level breakdown and are based upon U.S. Census population data.*

*It is anticipated an appropriate criterion for accounting for MS4 permit diversity will be determined during the project in the initial project planning phase. This points to our overall requirement that our volunteer subject matter experts are involved and integrated within the project.*

### **Desired Deliverables and Information**

4. Point 1 indicates that the awardee is required to synthesize data from multiple sources. Are these sources available for review before the proposal is due so that respondents can assess what type of data is provided? (I think these are the links at the end of the RFP.)

*WEF Response: The links at the end of the RFP are some examples of stormwater surveys that currently exist. This is not a complete list. The MS4 Survey Work Team members may identify other examples that would provide useful background as the survey questions are being developed.*

5. Point 3 says that the awardee is responsible for identifying the survey respondents. Does this mean that WEF has access to the mentioned databases? In what format are the databases? Are there specific search queries or identifiers within the databases that can clearly identify the MS4 permittees?

*WEF Response: As noted above, WEF has some contacts to provide, but they will need to be supplemented by a larger industry list. For those contacts we have access to, WEF will provide this information to the awardee in a format conducive to advancing the project. WEF does have designations in our membership database of individuals who have a stormwater focus.*

6. Point 5: in what format (Word, PowerPoint) are the reports expected? Are they expected to be in print-ready format with layout work?

*WEF Response:*

*All working draft reports should be in MS Word format. MS software files used to generate graphics should also be provided. The 2 final reports should be in print-ready format with layout work for internal review purposes. All native files used to support the reports (Excel, Access, etc.) should be provided as part of the project deliverable.*

### **Commenter 3**

1. With almost 8,000 MS4s in the U.S., does WEF have an estimate of the minimum number of survey respondents they would like to see for this analysis?

*WEF Response: As noted in a previous response, the applicant should offer their vision for what an appropriate survey participant rate should be. The successful proposal will stipulate how the survey will adhere to survey research best practices, be scientifically valid, and demonstrate statistical significance and confidence.*