

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Request for Proposal

Introduction

The Pacific Institute is seeking an experienced Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (ME&L) Contractor to (1) support a refinement of the project Theory of Change and development of the Impact Framework; (2) co-develop a ME&L methodology for its Water Equity and Resilience project, through a collaborative process with the project team; and (3) conduct an independent mid-grant evaluation using the ME&L methodology developed. Development and implementation of the methodology is expected to serve multiple purposes, including meeting donor requirements, contributing toward improving project outcomes and impact, and building internal capacity for monitoring and evaluation.

Background Information

Climate change poses numerous threats to communities across the United States, largely due to impacts on water. Water supplies are becoming less reliable as precipitation patterns shift and droughts intensify. Floods are increasingly severe – including in drier areas – due to rising seas, heavy rains, and more precipitation falling as rain rather than snow. Water quality is also deteriorating due to higher temperatures, heavy rains, extreme wildfires, and rising seas. Climate change is also stressing water and wastewater infrastructure, which is already deteriorating in many parts of the United States.

These climate impacts are having a profound effect on how communities can reliably and affordably access clean water. This poses a threat to human health and wellbeing, economic development, and ecosystem function and vitality. While all are at risk, these impacts disproportionately affect communities that are low-income, marginalized, and/or communities of color, many of whom already suffer from inadequate access to water services. These communities also have fewer resources and less political power to prepare for, respond to, and recover from shocks and stresses. Continued inaction increases these risks.

Through its *Advancing Water Equity and Resilience* project, the Pacific Institute aims to improve outcomes for people and nature by deploying evidence-based strategies for advancing water equity and climate resilience in the United States. The five-year project, launched in 2022, will generate science-based evidence of effective water equity and resilience strategies through cutting-edge research and strategic partnerships with NGOs serving frontline communities as well as the public and private sectors. We will then translate this research to action by sharing evidence-based decision-support resources, lessons, and best practices and championing innovative policies, programs, and investments. Attachment A contains the project Theory of

Change, including the project goal and objectives, key strategies, activities, and outcomes. Attachment B provides the key indicators for each of the project outcomes.

Scope of Services

The Pacific Institute is seeking an experienced ME&L Contractor to (1) support refinement of the project Theory of Change and development of the Impact Framework; (2) co-develop a ME&L methodology for its Water Equity and Resilience project, through a collaborative process with the project team; and (3) conduct an independent mid-grant evaluation using the ME&L methodology developed. This process is expected to meet donor requirements, improve project outcomes and impact, and build internal capacity for monitoring and evaluation broadly. Refinement of the Theory of Change and development of the ME&L methodology will be completed in 2023, and the mid-term evaluation will commence and be completed in 2024. Separate contracts for ongoing MEL consultation and support in 2024 through 2026 and a final grant evaluation in 2026 may be established depending on performance and project team needs.

Support Refinement of the Project Theory of Change and Development of the Impact Framework

The ME&L Contractor will support refinement of the project Theory of Change and development of the Impact Framework. The Theory of Change was originally created by the project team in 2021 as part of the proposal development process and needs refinement based on the lessons learned to date and greater clarity about the direction of this work in the coming years. Additionally, a more concise Impact Framework must now be developed to meet funder requirements and support communication about the project and the desired outcomes and impact. This refinement will inform development of the ME&L methodology and conducting the mid-grant evaluation.

Co-Develop Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Methodology

The ME&L Contractor will engage with the project team to co-develop an integrated ME&L methodology that supports evaluation, monitoring, and learning. The ME&L Contractor will be responsible for ensuring that the methodology is aligned with the project outcomes, donor reporting requirements, and broader impact of the initiative. The methodology will be developed through a collaborative, strategic, and iterative process with the project team. This process will, among other things, support capacity building for monitoring and evaluation among the project team and inform work beyond this specific project. The ME&L Contractor will produce a written methodology that includes the evaluation design, data collection plan, instruments/tools, and an operational work plan with a timeline. The methodology and work plan must be approved by the project team prior to any data collection activities.

Conduct Independent Mid-Grant Evaluation

The ME&L methodology will be implemented jointly by the ME&L Contractor and the Pacific Institute project team, with clear roles established within the ME&L methodology.

Implementation for the mid-grant evaluation will commence and be completed in 2024. The mid-term evaluation is independent and must be conducted by a person with appropriate subject matter expertise relevant to the context and objectives of the project, including working for and with community-based partners. The Contractor must have experience and a deep understanding of the sensitivities around working with a diverse set of stakeholders and communities, especially when balancing necessary input with burdening already overburdened communities. The evaluation is intended to meet funder requirements as well as further support capacity building for the project team about monitoring and evaluation for other organizational work streams.

Suggested Scope of Work

1. Initiate project (2023)
 - a. Review key documents, including the project proposal, risk and resilience framework, current Theory of Change, and grant reports submitted;
 - b. Clarify goals and objectives of the assignment;
 - c. Establish project timeline;
 - d. Delineate roles and responsibilities;
 - e. Clarify communications preferences and frequency; and
 - f. Produce a detailed work plan.

Suggested Deliverables: Detailed project work plan and timeline

2. Support refinement of the Theory of Change and development of the Impact Framework (2023)
 - a. Conduct desktop review and interview core project team members;
 - b. Provide feedback and recommendations for revising the Theory of Change, including the output and outcome indicators and targets; and
 - c. Provide feedback on the Impact Framework, including the impact goal, outcomes, and management indicators.

Suggested Deliverables: Revised Theory of Change and Final Impact Framework with project outputs, outcomes, and performance indicators

3. Co-develop methodology for the mid-grant evaluation, including roles and responsibilities, data collection and analysis plan (w/defined roles and responsibilities), and quality assurance/quality control processes (2023)
 - a. Co-identify the intended audiences for the evaluation;
 - b. Review funder requirements and expectations for the mid-grant evaluation;
 - c. Co-create the evaluative criteria and priorities, as well as the key learning and evaluation questions; and
 - d. Co-create mid-grant evaluation methodology, including the outline for the evaluation report, based on 2 rounds of feedback from the project team.

Suggested Deliverables: Written report and slide deck of the mid-grant evaluation methodology; virtual workshop(s) to present the methodology to the project team and, as appropriate, project partners

4. Conduct independent mid-grant evaluation (2024)
 - a. Confirm the scope and approach for the mid-grant evaluation, including roles and responsibilities, key deliverables, and timelines for activities;
 - b. Gather and analyze available data and information;
 - c. Prepare draft evaluation and share with the project team for input;
 - d. Revise evaluation based on 2 rounds of feedback from project team;
 - e. Prepare final mid-grant evaluation; and
 - f. Debrief project team on findings and recommendations.

Suggested Deliverables: Written report summarizing the evaluation methodology, findings, and recommendations for submission to the project funder; slide deck with the evaluation methodology, findings, and recommendations; virtual workshops to present the findings and recommendations to (1) the project team and (2) project partners

Anticipated Timeline

Proposal reception deadline: July 21

Proposal review and interviews with top applicants: July 24 – August 9

Final selection: week of Aug 14

Establish project workplan and timeline: September

Budget

The total budget should not exceed \$85,000. In the proposal, the consultant should provide a detailed breakdown of these costs. The proposal should also include a separate cost estimate for ongoing consultation and support in 2024 through 2026.

Application Process

Please submit proposals, not to exceed 10 pages, that include the following:

- Description of the consultant’s qualifications to undertake the described scope of work, including;
- Description of how the consultant plans to undertake the described scope of work (please briefly describe the products that will be developed);
- Description of how the consultant approaches any engagement with project partners, including communities or community-based organizations, especially the types we describe herein;
- Examples of similar projects or clients the consultant has served, including past work on equity-/environmental justice-related projects and community-based partners;
- Description of how the consultant would avoid any conflict of interest in undertaking the described scope of work;
- Cost proposal (please note the comments above on the budget); and
- Resumes/CVs of the consultant’s team may be attached to the proposal and will not count toward the proposal page limit (each resume/CV is not to exceed two pages).

Note: All proposals and documents submitted to Pacific Institute will be kept confidential. Please submit all documents via email to Zoe Henden at zhenden@pacinst.org by close of business on July 21, 2023. Please use the subject “Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Proposal” in the subject line of your email and let us know where you found this listing. Follow-up calls will take place with top candidates.

Attachment A: Project Theory of Change

Status Quo		Key Assumptions
<p>1. Climate impacts on water are intensifying, threatening human health and wellbeing, economic development, and ecosystem function and vitality.</p> <p>2. Climate impacts on water disproportionately affect poor and marginalized communities.</p> <p>3. The response to climate change has been piecemeal and reactive, emphasizing traditional supply-side options that are costly and unsustainable.</p> <p>4. Smart water strategies can effectively advance equity and resilience but uptake has been slow due to insufficient information, inadequate and inconsistent funding, and poor utilization of available technologies.</p>		<p>1. Opportunity: Climate change, racial equity, and economic recovery are priority policies for the Biden-Harris administration. Moreover, water is less politically divisive than many issues, and many water challenges are most severe in rural communities. This suggests an unprecedented opportunity for water resilience and water equity to be policy priorities locally, regionally, and nationally.</p> <p>2. Legitimacy: Evidence-generated by the Pacific Institute will be recognized as legitimate by policy and decision makers.</p> <p>3. Influential: Information and resources generated through this project will be utilized by decision makers and advocates to effectively advance water equity and resilience.</p> <p>4. Collaboration: Active collaboration throughout the project will create better solutions, increase uptake of those solutions, and promote capacity building among all partners.</p>
<p>Hypothesis: if this project generates sufficient evidence of effective water equity and resilience strategies and promotes awareness and uptake of those strategies through targeted outreach and policy engagement, then water equity and resilience will be strengthened in communities across the United States.</p>		
Strategy	Activities	Project Outcomes
Objective 1: Generate evidence of effective water equity and resilience strategies		
1.1 Assess opportunities for advancing water equity and resilience strategies	1.1.1. Assess water efficiency and reuse opportunities in the United States	<p>1.1. Cutting-edge research identifies innovative solutions and best practices for enhancing water equity and resilience.</p> <p>1.2. Innovative partners are pioneering approaches to accelerate uptake of water equity and resilience strategies.</p> <p>1.3 New connections / partnerships established as a result of PI facilitated collaboration</p>
	1.1.2. Assess water and climate risks and resilience opportunities for marginalized and BIPOC communities	
1.2 Partner with leaders to test innovative solutions for advancing water equity and resilience strategies.	1.2.1 Evaluate needs/opportunities for pilots and develop selection criteria	
	1.2.2 Implement and evaluate pilot project #1	
	1.2.3 Implement and evaluate pilot project #2	
	1.2.4 Implement and evaluate pilot project #3	
1.2.5 Implement and evaluate pilot project #4		
Objective 2: Accelerate awareness and uptake of evidence-based strategies		
2.1. Collaborate with partners and communities to share lessons and disseminate best practices through tailored outreach and communication to target audiences.	2.1.1. Develop a comprehensive communications strategy to promote uptake of water equity and resilience solutions, including among underserved communities.	2.1. Evidence generated is being used by governments, companies, and NGOs to advance water equity and resilience.
	2.1.2. Collaborate with partners to implement the communications plan.	
2.2. Champion public and company policies, programs, and practices that accelerate uptake of water equity and resilience strategies.	2.2.1. Develop a strategic policy engagement plan to accelerate uptake of water equity and resilience strategies by scaling enabling and removing impeding policies and practices	2.2. Innovative governments, companies, and NGOs are implementing effective water equity and resilience solutions.
	2.2.3. Collaborate with company, government, and NGO partners to implement the policy engagement plan.	
Five-Year Impact		Twenty-Year Impact
Early adopters from governments, companies, and NGOs are collaborating and using evidence generated to implement water equity and resilience strategies, including in underserved communities.		Strengthen water resilience to ensure essential water and wastewater services are reliably and universally available in a more variable and uncertain future.

Attachment B: Key Indicators and Targets

Objective	Project Outcome	Indicators	Targets
1. Generate evidence of effective water equity and resilience strategies	1.1. Cutting-edge research identifies innovative solutions for enhancing water equity and resilience.	Number of partners engaged in assessments from diverse sectors, geographies, genders, and races	10 partners engaged
		Number of cutting-edge research assessments completed	6
	1.2 Innovative partners are pioneering approaches to accelerate uptake of water equity and resilience strategies.	Number of pilots of innovative approaches	4
		Number of partners engaged in pilots from diverse sectors, geographies, genders, and races	10
2. Accelerate uptake of evidence-based strategies	2.1. Evidence generated is being used by governments, companies, and NGOs.	Number of outreach events (webinars, conferences) and stakeholders reached*	15, reaching 1,500 people*
		Number of times resources referenced by external audiences*	25*
		Number of times resources are accessed/downloaded*	100,000*
	2.2. Innovative governments, companies, and NGOs are implementing effective water equity and resilience solutions.	Number of policies and/or programs created or modified based on evidence generated*	5*

Note: The communications and policy engagement plans will include a final set of Type 2 indicators and targets associated with Objective 2.