



Request for Proposals:
Consultant Support for
Concrete Environmental Product Declaration
Kickstarter Initiative

Date of Issue: January 12th, 2023
Proposals Due: January 25th, 2023 5:00 PM EST

Total Funding Available: \$250,000

All proposals must be submitted to:
buildings@masscec.com

I. SUMMARY

As part of its work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to the built environment, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (“MassCEC”) is seeking a qualified consultant (“Consultant”) with strong relationships to Massachusetts ready-mix concrete plants to administer a Concrete Environmental Product Declaration Kickstarter Initiative (the “Initiative”) to provide financial and educational support for plant owners to get set up to produce and begin publishing Environmental Product Declarations (“EPDs”) of concrete mixes. This will allow customers to specify for lower carbon concrete mixes on a performance basis so that plants have more flexibility in how to meet carbon reduction goals. The Consultant will also collect volume production data from participating plants for a period of two years, aggregate that information annually and provide it to MassCEC and the industry on an anonymized, aggregated basis. This information will allow for a more accurate understanding of how the Massachusetts concrete industry benchmarks against other states and regions. This RFP is seeking qualified Consultants with strong relationships with the 63 ready-mix concrete plants in Massachusetts.

II. ABOUT MASSCEC

MassCEC is a state economic development agency dedicated to accelerating the growth of the clean energy sector across the Commonwealth to spur job creation, deliver statewide environmental benefits and to secure long-term economic growth for the people of Massachusetts. MassCEC works to increase the adoption of clean energy while driving down costs and delivering financial, environmental, and economic development benefits to energy users and utility customers across the state.

MassCEC’s mission is to accelerate the clean energy and climate solution innovation that is critical to meeting the Commonwealth’s climate goals, advancing Massachusetts’ position as an international climate leader while growing the state’s clean energy economy. MassCEC is committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization where everyone is welcomed, supported, respected, and valued. We are committed to incorporating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice in all aspects of our work in order to promote the equitable distribution of the health and economic benefits of clean energy and support a diverse and inclusive clean energy industry. MassCEC strives to lead and innovate in equitable clean energy and climate solutions.

III. PROGRAM GOALS AND DESCRIPTION

Although electrification, improvements to energy code, and grid decarbonization efforts will decrease the operational carbon of buildings in Massachusetts over time, there are not yet analogous efforts for reducing embodied carbon of building materials used in constructing or

renovating buildings in Massachusetts. Upfront embodied carbon, which represents the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the manufacturing, transportation, and installation of building materials, is a significant contributor to emissions, particularly in a Massachusetts economy where a large amount of new construction is planned in the next five years.

EPDs are quickly growing to meet marketplace demand for increased transparency on climate and environmental impact in concrete mixes. EPDs can be customized to individual ready-mix plant operations and materials. After EPD software and information is set up for an individual plant, it is possible to deliver instant EPD data for any concrete mix. Often compared to a “nutrition label”, EPDs show the life cycle impact (on measures such as greenhouse gas impact, stratospheric ozone depletion, water systems impact, etc.) of all components of a concrete mix, without disclosing the specific recipe of the mix. EPDs are published by third party program operators who verify the information and ensure it complies with ISO 21930 and the North American PCR for Concrete, NSF International, August 2021 v2.1.

When concrete EPDs are available, EPD data is presented in a standardized way, which makes it possible for structural engineers, designers, and other customers who specify concrete to compare the environmental and climate impact of different mixes and to specify on a structural performance basis while minimizing emissions impact rather than on a less desirable “maximum cement” or other prescriptive basis.

The Initiative would provide a small reimbursement grant of \$3,000 per ready-mix concrete plant located in Massachusetts to partially offset the costs of setting up EPD generation software and generating third-party site specific EPDs. Smaller Massachusetts concrete ready-mix companies with only one or two plants in state would be granted an additional \$1,000. The Consultant would issue checks to Massachusetts concrete plants that participate after they demonstrate they have published acceptable third party verified EPDs. Participating plants would report annual volumes of mixes by EPD to the Consultant to be aggregated and presented in anonymous form.

While ready-mix plants may use any software and 3rd party verification party that meets the applicable standard for the program, MassCEC would be interested in learning if the Consultant can arrange for bulk purchasing that could further bring costs down for plants that want to participate. Participation and reimbursement is anticipated for approximately a year and half after official launch of the Initiative, although this period may change based on federal EPD support efforts and/or industry feedback. The Initiative is intended to kickstart Massachusetts concrete EPDs until federal support is available.

The Initiative has two goals:

- 1) Prepare ready-mix companies to provide instant plant-specific Type III EPDs complying with ISO 21930 and the North American PCR for Concrete, NSF International, August 2021 v2.1; and
- 2) Improve data collection about mixes sold by Massachusetts ready-mix plants so information can be better compared to other regions and states.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

Applicants may be individuals, sole proprietors, trade associations or non-profit organizations. For the sake of this RFP, the term “Applicant” may refer to either a single entity or several entities applying together. Teams with multiple entities should have one entity that takes responsibility for organizing the team and proposal (“Lead Applicant”). MassCEC will contract with the Lead Applicant. Lead Applicants must have a Massachusetts office and staffing.

Applicants must have the following expertise:

Marketing, Outreach, and Engagement:

Required Experience: Applicants will have broad experience in outreach and engagement with ready-mix plants in Massachusetts.

Desired Experience: Ideal applicants will have demonstrated networks, relationships, and regular engagement with potential participants of the program. MassCEC also values expertise in developing non-technical resources about low carbon concrete topics for audiences that may include the general public, design professionals, municipal officials, municipal boards, and citizen advisory panels.

V. BUDGET

MassCEC has budgeted \$250,000 for consultant services to support the Initiative.

- \$160,000 for small grants to concrete ready-mix plants (75% participation rate assumed) to offset costs associated with EPD development and software procurement,
- \$60,000 for Consultant to provide marketing, administration of grants, collection of reporting data for aggregated, anonymous release for 2 years, and
- \$30,000 miscellaneous services – to be authorized by a MassCEC project manager under the contract between the Consultant and MassCEC if educational or other opportunities arise to accelerate low carbon concrete adoption in Massachusetts.

If uptake of the grants exceeds 75% of plants, MassCEC will consider increasing the contract with the Consultant through an amendment to meet demand. If Applicants are not able to provide the proposed scope within the budget amount above, they should document costs by task and propose a total budget needed to deliver the scope. MassCEC will consider awarding a subset of tasks or allocating additional funding to the effort if there are no qualifying proposals within the budget. If ready-mix plant participation in the Initiative is lower than the 75% assumed in budgeting, funding from that budget category may be moved to a new low carbon concrete educational task with mutual agreement of MassCEC and Consultant and written approval of MassCEC Program Manager.

VI. SCOPE OF WORK

The Applicant will be responsible for the following Tasks:

- **Task 1: MassCEC coordination.** Check in and coordinate regularly with MassCEC staff. This will include monthly virtual meetings for the first four months and quarterly reporting with written updates on number of participating plants, grant invoices processed, and progress on volumes reporting and aggregation. At the end of the initiative in fall/winter 2025, Applicant will provide a brief final report summarizing number of plants that participated, what was learned from volumes tracking, and lessons learned from the Initiative.
- **Task 2: Market initiative to potential applicants.** Ensure that all 63 Massachusetts ready-mix producers are aware of the Initiative and have an opportunity to ask questions and get clarification about how the initiative will work. Applicant may choose most appropriate and effective methods of reaching this audience.
- **Task 3: Support participants in implementing EPD process and integrating software:** Applicants will direct participants to EPD verification providers and software options and serve as an informational resource when plant operators have questions or want clarification. If Applicant recommends conducting educational forums about the initiative (e.g. information that must be collected by participants, participating vendors, common questions, etc.), Applicant should budget for and plan for these events, keeping in mind equitable access for all plant operators in the state.
- **Task 4: Administer grant payments to participants:** Consultant will confirm applicant EPD and software implementation and provide stated rebate funding to participants to offset associated costs. MassCEC will provide \$50,000 of the small grant budget category upfront for the Consultant to draw down as verified invoices are approved and grant checks paid. Similar mechanisms for cash on hand will be agreed upon in contracting.
- **Task 5: Volumes data aggregation and reporting.** Consultant will collect volumes reporting data from participating plants, aggregate by strength class and report greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to MassCEC and industry by strength class once per year for two years.
- **Task 6: Miscellaneous Services.** Provide additional services, as needed, and as approved by the MassCEC Program Manager in writing.

VII. ESTIMATED TIMELINE

This timeline is subject to change at MassCEC's discretion.

Release of RFP for Services to Support Concrete EPD Kickstarter	January 12th, 2023
Questions due to MassCEC via email to buildings@masscec.com	January 19th, 2023 5:00 PM EST
Questions with Answers Posted to MassCEC Website	January 23rd, 2023
Proposals Due	January 25th, 2023 5:00 PM EST
Notification of Award	February 2023

A proposed timeline for the Concrete EPD Kickstarter Initiative is below. **Please note that this is an estimated timeline and dates are subject to change.**

Contract with Consultant Finalized	February/March 2023
Release of Marketing Materials and Outreach to Concrete Plants	March 2023 through October 2023
Technical Assistance, Invoice Reviews and Small Grant Payments	March 2023 through November 2024
First Year of Volumes Data Collection	February 2024
Aggregation by Strength Class of Estimated GHG Impact	April 2024
Second Year of Volumes Data Collection	February 2025
Aggregation by Strength Class of estimated GHG Impact	April 2025
Brief Final Report summarizing number of plants that participated, what was learned from volumes tracking, and lesson learned from the Initiative	Fall/Winter 2025

VIII. HOW TO APPLY

Responses to this RFP must be received by MassCEC no later than Friday, January 25th 2023 at 5:00pm ET. MassCEC does not expect to accept responses past the deadline.

Only complete, timely proposals will be considered. MassCEC, at its sole discretion, may determine whether an application is complete. The submission must be in electronic form, submitted via email to buildings@masscec.com. Proposals should be in a single PDF document. Please label submissions with “Embodied Carbon Reduction Challenge Consultant” in the email subject line.

Please include in your proposal:

- **Attachment A:** Authorized Applicant’s Signature and Acceptance Form
- **Attachment B:** Completed Application Form
- **Attachment C:** In format that Applicant prefers such as excel or word, provide a budget for each task. Please also include an hourly rate table for staff that will work on this scope under this contract.
- **Resumes** of individuals that will be part of the project team

Please review and be prepared to sign **Attachment D** (Sample Agreement) if selected for this effort. Any requested change to Attachment D (Sample Agreement) should be noted in Attachment B (Application Form).

IX. SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicant proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Completeness of Proposed Approach (25% of score)

- Does the Applicant plan to provide services commensurate with the Tasks requested by MassCEC in Section VI?
- Does the Applicant propose ideas and methods for supporting the initiative and leading an awareness campaign that will lead to high visibility in the ready-mix plant community in Massachusetts?
- How effective is the approach proposed by the Applicant to achieve the goals of the initiative?

Experience and Qualifications (25% of score)

- To what extent does the Applicant demonstrate the eligibility criteria outlined in Section IV?
- Has the Applicant successfully completed projects similar or relevant to the proposed work?
- Does the Applicant have close relationship with the Massachusetts ready-mix plant owner community? How does the Applicant propose to reach communities outside its normal sphere of contact and relationships?
- Does the Lead Applicant or other member of the Applicant Team have Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) certification as a diverse business enterprise or non-profit or do they meet the criteria for any of the diverse business enterprises certified with the SDO but have not completed certification with the SDO?

Cost Competitiveness (25% of score)

- How do the Applicant’s hourly rates compare to other Applicants?
- How does the Applicant’s overall cost compare to other Applicants?
- How does the Applicant’s proposed maximum fee compare to MassCEC’s budgeted cap and the fee proposed by other Applicants?
- How does the scale and quality of the proposed scope compare to the proposed maximum fee?

Overall Quality of Proposal (25% of score)

- Does the Applicant demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and motivators underlying the Initiative?
- Has the Applicant demonstrated an ability to engage with and communicate effectively to potential participants?
- Has the Applicant demonstrated sufficient creativity and flexibility to support the Initiative?

X. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

buildings@masscec.com

XI. GENERAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONDITIONS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

As a public entity, MassCEC is subject to Massachusetts’ Public Records Law, codified at Chapter 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Thus, any documentary material, data, or other information received by MassCEC from an applicant is a public record subject to disclosure.

Applicants shall not send MassCEC any confidential or sensitive information in response to this RFP.

DISCLAIMER & WAIVER AUTHORITY

This RFP does not commit MassCEC to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies. MassCEC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, modify the anticipated timeline, request modification of the application, negotiate with all qualified Applicants, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in MassCEC's best interests.

This RFP has been distributed electronically using MassCEC's website. It is the responsibility of Applicants to check the website for any addenda or modifications to an RFP to which they intend to respond. MassCEC accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Applicants who submit an application based on an out-of-date RFP document.

CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Upon MassCEC's authorization to proceed with the proposal, MassCEC and the awarded applicant(s) will execute a contract, substantially in the form of the Sample Agreement attached hereto as Attachment D, which will set forth the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties.