

Biochar Education: Addressing Barriers to Market Development

Request for Proposals

BACKGROUND

The Nebraska Forest Service (NFS), state forestry agency of Nebraska, Forest Products Utilization program works with individuals, businesses and organizations with forest products and wood market related activities. The U.S. Biochar Initiative (USBI) promotes biochar in North America for sustainable food security, improved soil fertility, environment, and climate resilience by engaging the scientific, agriculture, and biomass communities to use safe, stable, sustainable biochar. With US Forest Service funding, biochar market development and education has been a focus in recent years for the Nebraska Forest Service and USBI. We are seeking contracted technical assistance in the completion of educational documents to address barriers to biochar commercialization and adoption in seven key market sectors.

PROJECT OVERVIEW and STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Interest in biochar has been growing substantially over the past 10 years and scientific publications have grown exponentially over the past 5 years. However, there is a disconnect between biochar research and practitioners using biochar. Information on best practices, guidelines for biochar utilization, and specifications remains spotty. This project aims to reduce the knowledge gap and communicate the science of biochar to accelerate the adoption of biochar by key sectors that could benefit from its use.

SCOPE OF WORK

The project's scope of work is to address critical knowledge gaps in biochar utilization in key sectors (biochar amended compost, animal feed, manure management, viticulture, stormwater management, soil blends and growing media, landscape turf and trees). Up to three documents may be required for each sector including fact sheets, market development roadmaps, and detailed use and application guidelines. To successfully complete the educational campaign, the contractor will participate in regular meetings with the USBI Education Committee and organize quarterly meetings of sector specific steering committees. The steering committees will provide overall direction for the education materials, insight into the needs of the markets, and technical expertise.

DELIVERABLES

The end-products will be seven fact sheets (1 per key sector), seven market development roadmaps (1 per key sector) and four detailed use and application guidelines. Approximately 220 hours per market sector is anticipated for the development of these documents.

- Fact Sheet: Introductory information and topic overview.
- Roadmap: Strategic outline of barriers to development of a market sector. Addresses needs for biochar producers and/or end-users (markets) required for scale-up.
- Use Guideline: Could take the form of a case study including best uses, application methods, rates, frequency, seasonality, and ideal characteristics of the biochar where applicable.

Information may be expressed in text, tables and graphics to convey material for maximum impact and ease of interpretation. The end-products will be formatted in collaboration with the USBI Education Committee and ready for dissemination upon their completion.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The final products will be submitted no later than 3/1/2023.

BUDGET

Total project budget is \$78,000.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal person for the job will be someone with knowledge of the biochar industry and strong science communications background. Please include your qualifications with your response to this RFP.

QUOTE FORMAT AND TIMELINE

Bids for the contract award of this project will be evaluated by responsiveness to the RFP, proposed outcomes and responsiveness to the project timeline. Bids should be submitted no later than September 30, 2021.

POINT OF CONTACT

For questions regarding the request for quote, please contact:

Heather Nobert

Nebraska Forest Service

Hnobert2@unl.edu

402-472-2941