

State Permitting and Air Reporting System Upgrade

Request for Information – AQ101609

10/16/2009

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Air Quality Bureau

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

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SECTION 1.0 - GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Announcement

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (Department) is seeking information from vendors who would be interested in providing software and hardware development, training, and maintenance services for the upgrade or replacement of the State Permitting and Air Reporting System (SPARS) to account for changing trends in technology as well as to meet state and federal requirements.

This *Request for Information (RFI)* process is designed to provide information for the Department's preparation for the *Request for Proposals (RFP)* process. Interested parties may submit responses outlining their products and services to identify solutions related to the scope of work described in Section 3.0.

The Department encourages vendors who may specialize in one or more components of a system to respond to this *RFI*, as well.

The issuance of this *RFI* does not in any way obligate the Department to issue an *RFP* for the goods and services described in this *RFI*.

1.2 Content of the *RFI*

This *RFI* is designed to provide vendors with the information necessary for the preparation of an appropriate response. It is not intended to be comprehensive and each vendor is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive response and a complete product capability demonstration.

Responses should be based on the material contained in this *RFI* or any other relevant information the vendor thinks is appropriate.

By submitting a response, each vendor agrees that it will not bring any claim or have any cause of action against the Department, the State of Iowa, or any employee of the Department or the State, based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided or concerning the Department's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the vendor with pertinent information as intended by this *RFI*.

The Department reserves the right to modify this *RFI* at any time.

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1.3 Point of Contact

The point of contact at the Department from the date of release of this *RFI* through the closing date will be:

Rachel Quill
7900 Hickman Rd, Suite 1
Windsor Heights, IA 50324
Rachel.Quill@dnr.iowa.gov
515-281-8983

Vendors must direct all questions regarding this *RFI* to the point of contact. Contacting any other Department personnel with questions may disqualify responses from this *RFI*.

1.4 *RFI* Closing Date

All responses are due by 4:30 P.M., Central Time, on Tuesday, December 1, 2009 to the person listed as the point of contact in Section 1.3. The response must be in the office by the due date. The Department will not accept responses that do not arrive by the due date, even if those responses are postmarked by said due date.

Responses may be hand-delivered, faxed, e-mailed, or mailed to the Department. Responses will not be accepted over the telephone.

1.5 Review and Rejection of *RFI* Responses

The *RFI* review will not be subject to an *RFP* type evaluation but only to a review of the available software and services currently available. The Department reserves the right to contact vendors after the submission of responses for the purpose of clarification and to ensure mutual understanding.

The Department reserves the right to reject at any time any and all responses received, in whole and in part, in response to this *RFI*. Issuance of the *RFI* in no way constitutes a commitment by the Department to award any contract. Responding to this *RFI* is in no way a pre-requisite to answer the *RFP* contemplated in Section 1.1. This *RFI* process is for the state's benefit and is intended to provide the Department with competitive information to assist in the selection of goods and services.

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1.6 Retention of Responses

All responses and materials submitted in response to this *RFI* become the irrevocable and sole property of the State of Iowa. The Department will have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in the responses.

1.7 Cost of Preparing Responses

The Department is not responsible for any costs incurred by a respondent, including, but not limited to, preparation or delivery of the response, any on-site inspection that may be required, or any other activities related to this *RFI*. The Department will not reimburse any respondent for any such costs.

1.8 Public Records and Requests for Confidentiality

The release of information by the Department to the public is subject to Iowa Code Chapter 22 and other applicable provisions of law relating to the release of records in the possession of a State agency. Vendors are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these provisions prior to submitting a response. All information submitted by a vendor may be treated as public information by the Department unless the vendor properly requests that information be treated as confidential at the time of submitting the response.

Any requests for confidential treatment of information must be included in a cover letter with the Vendor's response and must enumerate the specific grounds in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other legal reasons which support treatment of the material as confidential and must indicate why disclosure is not in the best interests of the public. The request must also include the name, address and telephone number of the person authorized by the vendor to respond to any inquiries by the Department concerning the confidential status of the materials.

Any documents submitted which contain confidential information must be marked on the outside as containing confidential information, and each page upon which confidential information appears must be marked as containing confidential information. The confidential information must be clearly identifiable to the reader wherever it appears. All copies of the response submitted, as well as the original response, must be marked in this manner.

In addition to marking the material as confidential material where it appears, the vendor must submit one copy of the response from which the confidential information has been excised. The confidential material must be excised in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the material removed and to retain as much of the document as possible. These pages must be submitted with the cover letter and will be made available for public inspection.

The vendor's failure to request in the response confidential treatment of material pursuant to this section and the relevant laws and administrative rules will be deemed by the Department as a waiver of any right to confidentiality which the vendor may have had.

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1.9 Copyrights

By submitting a response, the vendor agrees that the Department may copy the response for purposes of facilitating the evaluation or to respond to requests for public records. The vendor also agrees that such copying will not violate any copyrights in the materials submitted.

1.10 Restrictions on Gifts and Activities

Iowa Code chapter 68B contains laws which restrict gifts which may be given or received by state employees and requires certain individuals to disclose information concerning their activities with state government. Vendors are responsible for determining the applicability of this chapter to their activities and for complying with these requirements. In addition, Iowa Code chapter 722.1 provides that it is a felony offense to bribe a public official.

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SECTION 2.0 - BACKGROUND

The Department is an executive branch agency with the authority to administer a variety of rules and regulations, including the air quality regulations as delegated by the USA Environmental Protection Agency.

In 1998, the Department was awarded \$275,000 by the IOWAccess Advisory Council to create a system that would provide an electronic means for regulated entities to apply for air construction and operating permits (applications) and to submit air emissions inventories (inventories). As developed, SPARS consisted of an Oracle database with a PowerBuilder interface to access the contents of this database. In addition, the PowerBuilder's DataWindows were used to add, edit, and display data from the Oracle database, as well as to create applications and inventories.

Even though regulated entities did not have direct access to the Oracle database located at the Department's Air Quality Bureau (AQB), they were able to create their own applications and inventories by obtaining client versions of SPARS contained in individual compact discs. When received, trained AQB staff would import the information contained in these compact discs into the SPARS production server.

In February 2006, SPARS was web-enabled to give owners and operators of stationary and portable sources the ability to use the internet to submit applications and inventories. Appeon for PowerBuilder was used to web enable the application for regulated entities, while AQB staff continue to use the workstation-based functionality.

As a result of this web enablement, the SPARS production server located at the AQB became accessible to users outside of the AQB allowing them to: (1) access permit and emissions data stored in the database portion of SPARS; (2) create applications and inventories; (3) timely submit these applications and inventories to the AQB; (4) reuse existing electronic data to create or modify applications and inventories; (5) attach supporting documentation in several formats (Excel, PDF, Word, TIFF, or HTML); and (6) receive prompt confirmation that applications and inventories have been received by the AQB.

At the time of its development and implementation, SPARS was considered a state of the art technology and Iowa was one of the few states accepting electronic applications and inventories.

SPARS current environment includes: PowerBuilder Version 11; Appeon Version 5.1; Oracle Version 11g; and Crystal Reports Version 11.

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After more than ten years of being in production, SPARS is need of updating or refreshed due to some of its outdated components and poorly functioning processes. Examples of these issues include:

- ❖ **AQB FORMS.** AQB reporting forms are revised and updated on a regular basis to ensure they are consistent with federal and state regulations. However, making these changes in SPARS is difficult and resource intensive due to time-consuming programming requirements in the PowerBuilder Data Windows. Examples of this include new reporting forms that are developed, current reporting forms that are revised, and specifically, the Title V Operating Permit Part 2 applications, which offer limited functionality.
- ❖ **CONNECTIVITY PROBLEMS.** Several external customers cannot access SPARS Web due to possible issues with the facility's firewall and/or security protocols that do not allow Apeon to be downloaded. Apeon is the portal to SPARS Web; without it, access is not possible. A satisfactory solution to this issue has not been found. Other external users also experience a slow or diminished response time when connected to SPARS Web.
- ❖ **USER-FRIENDLINESS.** Most customers find that working with SPARS is difficult because:
 - PowerBuilder DataWindows are not intuitive;
 - SPARS warning messages are few;
 - Most SPARS Help messages provide no useful information;
 - Some SPARS error messages are confusing;
 - Database errors force the user to shut down SPARS and start all over again;
- ❖ **SPARS USER RIGHTS.** Customers given the rights to only create minor source inventories are able to create Title V inventories also. Facility Administrators wishing to hire a consultant to do work in SPARS for them, assign a "Facility Super User" role to the consultant. Unfortunately, the Facility Super User cannot create applications and inventories making this SPARS role useless and confusing.
- ❖ **SPARS WEB TIME-OUT.** A SPARS Web session is supposed to time-out at 2 hours from its start. During the last three weeks of the month of March, SPARS Web is heavily used by AQB's external customers. As a result, two issues arise during this time:
 - SPARS cannot handle database errors commonly made by users. These database errors cause the application to shut down automatically disconnecting all customers using SPARS Web at the time.
 - SPARS cannot provide a 2-hour time-out period. Many users are timed out after only 20 minutes.
- ❖ **DATA QUERIES.** Internal SPARS customers are limited in their ability to create ad-hoc queries in SPARS to retrieve needed data.

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- ❖ **DATA CONSISTENCY.** Changes made via one customer may alter or corrupt information entered by another customer. In other words, changes made in Site Management can propagate back to existing applications and inventories and corrupt the data in them.
- ❖ **DATA CORRUPTION.** Organization names, contact names, and addresses for one facility may be found incorrectly as part of the SPARS record for other facilities.
- ❖ **SPARS DESKTOP.** Saving entries using the SPARS construction permit tracking tool is **extremely** slow. This issue affects engineers and some Support staff members on a daily basis. In addition, construction permit applications cannot be created on SPARS Desktop.
- ❖ **LIMITATIONS ON CHANGES TO FACILITY INFORMATION.** Many times when working in SPARS applications and inventories, customers wish to make corrections to the address and/or to any of the names associated with the facility. Unfortunately, in most cases, SPARS does not allow this and forces customers to exit the application and start over again. SPARS Help Desk has to make these changes using TOAD to access the back-end of the application, because SPARS does not allow these changes to be made through the front-end of the application.
- ❖ **CROMERR Deficiencies (Cross-Media Electronic Reporting Rule).** There are at least five CROMERR requirements with which SPARS does not comply:
 - **Copy of Record.** In order to comply with these requirements, SPARS must have the capability of creating a copy of record that would satisfy at least the following elements:
 - i. It must be a true and correct copy of the electronic document that was received;
 - ii. It must include all the electronic signatures that have been executed to sign the document;
 - iii. It must include the date and time of receipt to help establish its relation to submission deadlines, to the circumstances of its submission, and to other possibly associated documents that may have been submitted;
 - iv. It must be viewable in a human-readable format that clearly indicates what the submitter intended that each of the data elements or other information items in the document means;
 - v. It must be available for review and timely repudiation by the individuals to whom the document is attributed, as its submitters and/or signatories.
 - **Electronic signature device.** Under CROMERR, systems that accept electronic signatures (e-signatures) must be able to provide proof that the e-signatures they

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accept are valid and were created with an e-signature device that was not compromised at the time of signature.

- **Binding signature to the document.** CROMERR requires that e-signatures must be bound to content of submissions, so that content cannot change without detection after the signature is executed. The system must provide a method of ensuring that any breach of a signed document's integrity can be detected. Such methods are available in the form of signatures that incorporate a hash value of the content being signed.
- **Understanding the act of signing.** CROMERR requires that each signatory have the opportunity, at the time of signing, to review the content or meaning of the required certification statement, including any applicable provisions that false certification carries criminal penalty.
- **Automatic acknowledgment of submission.** CROMERR requires that an automatic acknowledgment of submission be sent by the system. The information included in this automatic message should identify the document received and include the name of the signatory, the date and time of receipt.

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SECTION 3.0 - SCOPE OF WORK

The Department is seeking a comprehensive solution addressing the issues described in Section 2.0. The Department's application development standard is Microsoft C#. All proposed solutions should be based on this standard. The Department may or may not continue to use the Oracle database. Proposed solutions may be based on Oracle or Microsoft SQL Server.

Future reports within the Department may be developed by using Microsoft Reporting Services. The Department may or may not continue to use Crystal Reports.

In addition to resolving the issues noted previously in this *RFI*, the Department would like to retain the current system functionality, as described below.

- Create new applications and inventories using previously submitted data.
- Maintain complete customer records and facility information.
- Require a personal identification number (PIN) for electronic document submittal.

Vendors' responses must describe how equipment, service or product would meet any or all of the following items. The DNR Air Quality Bureau is interested in new and innovative methods of providing service to our customers.

Specifically, vendors' responses should address the following items:

- A. Provide examples of similar air quality emission and permitting applications with which you might have been involved.
- B. Describe any application or database-migration tools that your proposed solution intends to use.
- C. Does your proposed solution include third-party licenses that the Department will need to purchase?
- D. Advantages and disadvantages of moving from an Oracle database to a Microsoft SQL Server database.
- E. Explain how your proposed solution intends to address each of the CROMERR deficiencies described in Section 2.0.
- F. Describe how your proposed solution will manage and protect customers' user IDs, passwords, and PINs.
- G. Explain the user-friendliness of your proposed solution.
- H. Describe the web security technology (e.g. Secure Sockets Layer) employed by your proposed solution.

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- I. Describe the ability of your proposed solution to import XML files.
- J. If applicable, provide a description of any other feature, service, or option that you believe would improve the current system.

Additionally, responses should include a high level cost estimate with project assumptions.

SECTION 4.0 - RESPONSE SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Responses shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements stated in the section.

4.1 Vendor Identifying Information

- ✓ State the name and principal place of business of the vendor.
- ✓ Identify the vendor's type of business entity such as a corporation or partnership.
- ✓ State the vendor's place of incorporation, if applicable. At the respondent's discretion, provide an organization chart for the vendor. Include any parent, subsidiary and affiliate companies you feel may be relevant to this presentation.
- ✓ State the name, title, mailing address, e-mail address, telephone number, and fax number of the vendor representative to contact regarding all technical matters concerning this RFI.

4.2 Vendor References

Please include any applicable references

4.3 Response Format

Responses shall be organized as follows:

- ✓ Cover page with organization name and contact information as described in Section 4.1. Cover page must be signed by vendor.
- ✓ Table of contents.
- ✓ Solution description as it relates to the items specified in Section 3.0.
- ✓ Summary of estimated effort and cost.
- ✓ Attachments

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All textual responses are limited to 15 letter-sized pages. The page limit does not include the cover page, table of contents, or attachments. Vendors should use a font size no less than 10-point and should number all pages of the response.

After review of responses, the Department may invite vendors to provide a presentation of their proposed solutions.

SECTION 5.0 – RESOURCES

Upon request, the Department will make available any and all of the following resources to interested vendors:

- ⌚ Iowa Air Quality Regulations - IAC 567 Chapters 20 – 35
(<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/aspx/ACODocs/chapterList.aspx?pubDate=10-07-2009&agency=567>)
- ⌚ Cross-Media Electronic Reporting Rule – 40 CFR Part 3
(http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=f9a49ec58eba2b069551733be816814d&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title40/40cfr3_main_02.tpl)
- ⌚ SPARS Web Information (<http://www.iowadnr.gov/air/prof/SPARS/>)
- ⌚ SPARS System Documentation
- ⌚ Title V Emissions Inventory – 2009 SPARS Training Manual