

MARC Food System Mapping Website RFP

Questions & Answers - 7/28/2022

Below are responses to inquiries related to the MARC Food System Mapping Website RFP.

General

1. Q: Has a Q&A or an addenda been released yet?

A: The Q&A will be released July 28, 2022.

2. Q: Is the due date still the same?

A: Yes. To be eligible for consideration, one electronic copy of the response must be submitted to Matt Riggs, mriggs@marc.org, no later than 4 p.m. on Friday, August 5, 2022. Late submittals will not be considered and will be returned to submitter unopened.

3. Q: What is the start date for the project after final selection?

A: The project start date will be on or before October 3, 2022. The final selection of a contractor shall occur on or about August 22, 2022. Initial meetings with selected firm begin October 3, 2022.

4. Q: Do you have a deadline for completion of the work and a desired launch date? Is there a specific event driving the launch date?

A: The RFP states that the new site must launch on or before April 1, 2023. The grant funding this project officially ends September 30, 2023. We would like to have the website up and running well before this date. If the proposer thinks that they need more\less time, they can propose and alternate timeline.

5. Q: Is there a mandatory pre-proposal meeting? Given ongoing COVID concerns and the cost of travel relative to the size of the project budget, could the finalist interviews be conducted virtually?

A: The project selection team may require presentations by those firms identified on the proposer short list. MARC can accommodate prospective vendors who prefer a virtual option.

6. Q: What are the expectations of the timing and level of consultant's interaction (number of meetings, purpose of meetings) with the Project Advisory Committee and other individuals identified as providing "guidance", e.g., what are the milestones mentioned in the RFP, and what will be the form of the guidance provided at those milestones?

A: The vendor is expected to engage in periodic face-to-face meetings (in-person or virtual), and provide regular check-ins (emails are acceptable) that provide information on things like project status, vendor needs from MARC, upcoming completion dates, etc. We estimate 2-3 initial meetings around project kick-off, weekly or bi-weekly check-ins, and ad hoc face-to-face meetings as needed throughout the duration of the project. The vendor is expected to establish project milestones and be open to input from the MARC team.

7. Q: Does the project scope consist of creating a website and content management system from scratch?

A: There is no existing website, therefore the following questions cannot be answered:

- How many pages and documents are on the website today?

- Would you like to migrate all the content into the new one?
- How many visitors does the current website receive on a monthly basis?
- How many pages of content do you anticipate transferring to the new site?
- What are your current pain points with the existing website?
- What are the current technical challenges (if any)?

We do anticipate that the completed site will be less than 30 pages total. There may be additional educational documents to add. See below for CMS-specific information.

8. Q: How do you intend to create content for the site? Do you have people for that on staff? Will you need the vendor to help develop content?

A: The vendor should provide options for content presentation. Though we welcome content suggestions from the vendor, the web design team will develop content with input from the Project Advisory Committee.

9. Q: How many people will be on your web design team?

A: Five.

10. Q: What sort of experience do they have with projects like this?

A: Among its members, the design team has a wealth of experience designing, updating and maintaining websites. A webmaster is part of the team with 15+ years experience in HTML, CSS, Java and various content management systems.

11. Q: Will the MARC webmaster be the final arbiter of design and development decisions on behalf of MARC for the site? If not, who is the POC (individual) responsible for leading / facilitating MARC collaboration with the consultant, and what is the process by which MARC will review and approve the site development decisions?

A: The MARC webmaster will be the final arbiter of design and development decisions on behalf of MARC for the site. The individual responsible for leading/facilitating the collaboration with the consultant will be the project coordinator. A small web development team (includes webmaster and project coordinator) will review and approve the site development decisions.

12. Q: How many proposals do you expect from local firms? How strongly do you prefer a local candidate?

A: We prefer to work with local firms, but with the digital/online nature of this work we will consider proposals from out-of-region U.S.-based firms. We will not accept proposals from off-shore firms.

Technical

13. Q: Do you have an idea of other pages the site will need besides the directory, mapping system, and communication platform, such as home page, about page, contact page, user profile page, etc.

A: There is no page list, but content pages will be minimal, probably 12 or fewer.

14. Q: Is there a URL for the website already?

A: We have purchased the domain registration and hosted site, kcfoodsystem.com. We're open to changing the name.

15. Q: What is the current hosting environment?

A: There is no current hosting environment. MARC has a hosting server available, as well as SiteGround and MediaTemple for other websites in the MARC family.

16. Q: “Media library that allows content to be sorted with tags or keywords.” Is it supposed to be used on a website by site users?

A: This is back-end functionality only, not user-facing.

17. Q: Does MARC have a style guide or a brand guide?

A: This site does not have to abide by existing MARC style or branding.

18. Q: Can MARC confirm that it is responsible for providing the branding (brand guidelines), and logo for the website design that constitute the “customized, modern look”, or should the vendor include a formalized branding phase for this engagement - logo, messaging, positioning - visual identity expressions?

A: MARC has designers available. Responses may include branding as part of their bid if it is a service offered by the firm and they feel it is within the project budget.

19. Q: Who are your primary and secondary users?

A: Our intended audience of businesses, non-profits, government and the general public includes farmers, food pantries, food rescuers, composters, donation kitchens, volunteers or the many other food system stakeholders.

20. Q: Would you like detailed research in terms of your audience in the form of an audience needs assessment?

A: No.

21. Q: Do you expect copywriting or editing services as part of engagement?

A: Writing and editing will be handled by subject matter experts and public affairs team members at MARC.

22. Q: For the calendar functionality, is there a specific service that you currently are using which would need to be integrated into the website?

A: Our organization will be using Growth Zone for event management, but integration is not necessarily required for this project.

23. Q: Will the contact form or survey functionality need to integrate with a CRM?

A: No.

24. Q: Can you provide more information about contact management and the optional email marketing features? Are there specific integrations or functionality you’re looking for (such as a newsletter sign-up, newsletter template creation, CRM integrations for email campaigns, etc.)

A: We will need to collect email addresses for newsletters. This can be by connecting to GrowthZone or MailChimp, or downloading entries. Templates and CRM integrations are not needed.

25. Q: Are you using any tools for contacts management and email marketing now? If yes, what are they?

A: MARC is transitioning to GrowthZone for contact management and potentially email marketing. We are currently using Ungerboeck and MailChimp.

26. Q: Could you confirm / provide more detail on the level of interoperation with Growth Zone or other similar systems that you envision as (1) part of this project, (2) part of future phases.

A: Growth Zone will be our event management and contact management solution. Potential interactions with this site include importing event information and exporting contacts to the contact database.

27. Q: What are the SEO requirements for this project - pre-launch and post-launch?

A: The site should be optimized for SEO at launch with SEO optimized content, site structure, meta data optimization, mobile friendliness, analytics and tracking tools installed, sitemap.

28. Q: Should we assume all design assets - images, photos, illustrations, videos - will be jointly curated by client and vendor? And will be pulled from royalty free stock libraries?

A: MARC will be able to provide the majority of media assets images from our media library and stock licenses. The vendor should be able to make recommendations for additional sources if needed.

29. Q: Do you need documentation for governance of the website?

A: Yes, documentation is required.

30. Q: What type of social media integration are you looking for in the new website?

A: This is a new project that does not have an established social media presence. Site content should be optimized for sharing on social platforms, i.e., the correct image is pulled in for item previews.

31. Q: Do you have any existing user research?

A: No.

32. Q: Do you have personas of your target audience?

A: No.

33. Q: Would you consider the following integrations?

a. Ability to integrate with ArcGIS for mapping and Tableau for analytical tools.

A: Integrations with these tools can likely be done with iFrames instead of API.

b. Ability to integrate with third-party applications, such as Growth Zone, for marketing and growth.

A: Integration with GrowthZone for events and adding contacts would be preferred but not required.

c. Integration with the Google Maps API to identify and display key food system locations.

A: MARC has a Google API key and would prefer to utilize the Google Maps API for any map or location needs.

d. Integrated APIs to embed from Twitter news.

A: Possibly, depending on the social channels identified for use.

e. Ability to use calendar tools for events.

A: Yes, this needs to be included in the site.

f. Google Tag Manager and/or Google Analytics implementation for tracking site traffic, document downloads, internal site search, outbound links, and other functionality.

A: Yes, this should be included in the site.

g. Built-in form/survey tool or seamless integration with a third-party.

A: Yes, a native CMS form or survey tool would be fine for this.

h. Automated reporting for broken links and outdated content.

A: Yes, this needs to be available through the CMS or a third-party.

34. Q: Are there any additional features or integrations for the initial launch of the site that are not mentioned in the RFP?

A: None.

35. Q: Does MARC require the ability for each food network member to login to the site to add or update their location information contained in the directory and map? How will information be vetted for accuracy and authenticity by MARC? Only after screening by the administrator of the website will this stakeholder be added to a database and pinned on a map?

A: MARC does require the ability for each food network member to login to the site to add or update their location information contained in the directory and map. Information will be vetted for accuracy and authenticity by MARC staff before the update goes live on the database and gets pinned on the map.

36. Q: "Each stakeholder can choose from the categories with which they associate and share their information." How will this sharing be done? Will there be exact application forms that should be filled out by stakeholders for sharing their information (organization name, purpose, contact, address, hours, website, social media profiles, opportunities, etc)? Is it something MARC staff will receive through email for example or a Google Form and then enter into the CMS? Or do the stakeholders need access to a submission system/CMS interface?

A: Ideally, users would submit the content to the CMS and it will be reviewed and approved by MARC staff without manual re-entry.

37. Q: One of the core functionalities of the system will be the communication platform. Does this mean direct communication through a chatting platform? And this is a communication between whom, platform members and users?

A: Communication will be between platform members and website users.

38. Q: On the website which kind of filters should be added for maps? How complex are the filters? Will categories for filters include information such as: demographics, food access, food retail, health, household economics, etc?

A: The exact filters have not been determined but will be mostly based on location and self-identified categories. Expected items include, location (ZIP code), material type, location type.

39. Q: Visitors can create a user account and select which information is automatically fed to their profile upon site login. Is it the kind of subscription for newsletters that will be notified by email? Any other functionality that could be provided for users?

A: This feature is not for newsletter subscriptions. Users who log in should have a profile with location information and be able to submit their information for inclusion on the map.

40. Q: Can MARC confirm that it is responsible for providing all of the written site content to the consultant, to include the addresses, coordinates, and information about the key food system locations, the text to appear on the site, documents and links, etc.? Who will be responsible for generating and providing this content?

A: MARC will be responsible for providing all content to the vendor. The project coordinator, Matt Riggs, will be the lead for generating and providing this content.

41. Q: Is there any kind of financial support, sponsorship, or collecting money actions through the platform?

A: No.

42. Q: Job opportunities: does this mean that there will be exact application forms that should be filled by the user to apply for a position or there will be contact info/email address only?

A: There will be contact info only such as email, web link, phone number, etc.

43. Q: How will you measure the success of the new website? What are some KPIs?

A: Success will be measured by organic traffic, new vs. returning visitors, session duration, bounce rate and quantity of searches within the site.

CMS

44. Q: Will the CMS be provided by the vendor or will some other third-party platform be used? If third-party platform, does MARC have a preference: open source, commercial proprietary (Drupal, WordPress, etc.), other?

A: Open source or commercial proprietary are acceptable.

45. Q: Besides Drupal, can you provide more information about the CMS that are used on current MARC websites?

A: MARC owns and maintains several websites that use Kentico, WordPress, Drupal and are entirely HTML with no CMS.

46. Q: Is there a vendor that is currently providing or has previously provided CMS services to MARC?

A: MARC owns and maintains several websites that use Kentico, WordPress, Drupal and are entirely HTML with no CMS.

47. Q: From the technical perspective, which functionalities must be covered by the CMS?

A: Content editing and publishing, media management and storage, publishing controls, version controls and backups, user access levels, WYSIWYG editing and raw HTML editing.

48. Q: How many staff members (site administrators and content managers) are maintaining the website?

A: Estimated to be five to seven, most likely two administrators and five non-technical content editors.

49. Q: How many users or content providers will the CMS have?

A: Same as above, estimated five to seven editors and administrators.

50. Q: “Implement a content management system with multiple roles that support several users.” Which roles should be considered/are expected by MARC?

A: Content managers, site administrators, and stakeholders.

51. Q: Will site administrators and content managers need to be trained? Will they be available for group training sessions?

A: Yes, training documentation or a training session should be provided by the vendor. Site administrators and content managers will be available for training.

52. Q: On the website, information will be managed and published by website administration only? Examples: publish educational materials, posts, research results, etc.

A: Yes.

53. Q: “A content review workflow process in place for content editors.” Should this process be completely automated through the CMS, or can some manual actions be done by content managers?

A: Administrators or content managers should be able to manually publish content in workflow processes.

54. Q: Will you require different levels of admin permissions?

A: Yes.

55. Q: Can you provide more details about the levels of permissions you will need for CMS user roles on the website?

A: Basic roles should include content managers (create, copy, delete content), site administrators (super user access).

Budget

56. Q: What is the budget/range for the project

A: The maximum budget allocated for this project through the site launch is \$50,000.

57. Q: Does the budget include tech support and hosting?

A: The \$50,000 budget covers all development costs through site launch. Post-launch support and hosting costs should be included in responses separately.

58. Q: Do you have a yearly budget or estimate of the amount of maintenance you will need after the launch of the new site?

A: A post-launch budget has not been identified. Responses should include maintenance and retainer options and estimated hosting costs separately from the development budget.

59. Q: If the full scope of work is not achievable in the 6-month timeline and/or under the budget cap of \$50,000, would MARC be open to a) a proposal that suggested a paired down scope, b) a time and materials proposal to meet your goals of budget and deliverables, or c) a phased launch with the first launch before April 1?

A: The grant funding this project officially ends September 30, 2023. We would like to have the website up and running by April 1, 2023. If the proposer thinks that they need more\less time, they can propose and alternate timeline. We do not want a paired down scope or a time and materials proposal.

60. Q: Please clarify the seemingly conflicting information in Contract items B(i) and B(iv) – Does MARC intend this project to be a firm fixed price (FFP) (i.e. B(i)(b) indicate the percentage of each Service that has been completed by Consultant as of the date of the invoice) or time and materials (i.e., “B(i)(d) indicate the time spent by each of the Consultant's employees and approved subcontractors assigned to the Project during the previous month, and (e) provide a summary of all other direct and indirect costs incurred...” Due to the language in B(iv), this seems like it is a FFP as a retainage may be held until MARC’s final acceptance of the work.

A: This is intended to be a firm fixed price contract that cannot exceed the maximum budget. The proposer can suggest a schedule of payments including a deposit, interim payments and final payment upon acceptance of the final website.