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## **Questions and Answers on the Request for Proposals Issued Mar. 18, 2026**

**Proposal Submittal Deadline: April 30, 2026**

*Where potential bidders posed similar questions, we have paraphrased and combined them.*

**Q:** Are the 26 samples all macroinvertebrate samples?

**A:** DRBC expects 26 macroinvertebrate samples and 26 periphyton samples per sampling year. The periphyton samples will consist of taxonomic identification of diatoms and soft algae, benthic chlorophyll a and ash free dry mass (AFDM) taken from a rock scrape (filtered and frozen in field); and water column chlorophyll a (filtered and frozen in field).

**Q:** Will all 26 samples be received in one batch?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** The three large kick samples are combined into one sample, correct? They do not need to be processed separately, correct?

**A:** Correct.

**Q:** Must we start a new reference collection every two years, or can we continue to build on the same collection, only adding new taxa not found in the previous sample batches?

**A:** The reference collection is to be built upon DRBC's existing reference collection. DRBC will share a spreadsheet of the existing reference collection with the selected bidder.

**Q:** The QAPP section 1.8 states, "A sub-set of samples (10%) is sent to an outside contractor as a part of the Quality Control requirements for the project" . . . and later in section 2.4 states that, "10% of samples will be sent to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3 Field Laboratory (or other suitable independent laboratory) for sorting efficiency measurement and taxonomic verification." Are you looking for us to provide costs to send out 10% of samples for external QA/QC? Or is that something DRBC will be taking care of after data submittal and sample return?

**A:** DRBC will be responsible for arranging 3<sup>rd</sup> party QA/QC after data submittal and sample return.

**Q:** Are any metrics (IBIs) to be calculated?

**A:** The contractor will not be asked to calculate any IBIs.

**Q:** We do not see it specified in the QAPP; is the successful contractor expected to fully slide mount all specimens in the Family Chironomidae and Class Oligochaeta?

**A:** The mounted reference collection specimens should include at least one specimen of each taxon. DRBC will share a spreadsheet of the existing reference collection with the selected bidder.

**Q:** Are historical macroinvertebrate and/or periphyton data available in WQX or another accessible database for review and comparison?

**A:** Yes, DRBC can provide the selected contractor with the historical data sets.

**Q:** On your Cost sheet (Appendix C), you have requested unit cost for Macroinvertebrate Reference Collection. Is this because you want a separate reference collection for each sample, you want the cost of the project wide reference collection distributed across the 26 samples or would you prefer one total cost for the reference collection (i.e. unit of 1)?

**A:** The cost of the project wide reference collection should be distributed across the 26 samples.

**Q:** The RFP pg. 4 states “The final deliverable should include all data files (including the macroinvertebrate reference collection index), bench sheets, laboratory notes, digital photographs, mounted slides and individually preserved specimens (including those in the macroinvertebrate reference collection) comprising the results of each processed sample, as well as all remaining sorted, processed and detrital sample materials. All materials must be clearly labeled, preserved separately and not recombined when shipped back to DRBC”. But what about the non-reference collection specimens? Can they be combined to one vial per sample after identification?

**A:** Yes, non-reference specimens can be combined.

**Q:** You are stating you want the residual debris from the picked and unpicked sample portions returned in addition to the physical specimens, correct?

**A:** Correct.

**Q:** The 2014 DRBC Bioassessment QAPP cites the ANSP Procedure for Semi-Quantitative Analysis of Soft Algae and Diatoms (P-13-65), and the RFP requires this “or equivalent

methods”. What is considered an equivalent method? Would the DRBC prefer a more robust quantitative counting protocol for diatoms (e.g., ANSP Procedure No. P-13-39 or a timed-presence method) or stick with the cited semi-quantitative method?

**A:** Despite what is listed in the QAPP, DRBC requests that periphyton methods follow “Protocols for the analysis of algal samples collected as part of the U.S. Geological Survey National Water-Quality Assessment Program,” ANSP Report No. 02-06.

<https://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/protocols/algprotocol/algprotocol.pdf>

**Q:** Are there additional QA/QC procedures outside of what is described in the ANSP procedures?

**A:** There are no QA/QC procedures for the periphyton outside what is described in the ANSP procedures.

**Q:** Do you need physical and photo voucher collections for Periphyton as well, or just for macroinvertebrates?

**A:** Physical voucher specimens are not required for periphyton; however, photo voucher collections are requested, documenting each unique taxa.

**Q:** The QAPP says that benthic chl-a samples go to the ANS Biogeochemistry lab for analysis. I want to confirm that the present RFP includes benthic chlorophyll-a/AFDM samples and that the contract lab would receive frozen, dewatered tubes of benthic material for these analyses.

**A:** Correct. The selected contract lab would receive the benthic chlorophyll a, water column chlorophyll a, and AFDM samples in addition to the macroinvertebrate and algal taxonomy samples.

**Q:** Is the successful contractor expected to contract with a qualified laboratory for taxonomic QC of periphyton?

**A:** No.

**Q:** Are the algae materials, samples, and slides to be returned to DRBC?

**A:** No.

**Q:** For the chlorophyll samples, will there be duplicates? How many?

**A:** DRBC will provide one duplicate sample for each of the analyses (25 unique sample sites plus one duplicate).