

## Draft RFP for Study to Assess Virginia's Research Assets

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit sealed proposals to establish a contract through competitive negotiation for the purchase of analytical consulting services by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), on behalf of the Virginia Research Investment Committee (VRIC).

Specifically, SCHEV seeks expert assistance in conducting a study that will be an assessment of the Commonwealth's research assets, including those located at or within its public and private universities, federal research facilities and private sector companies. The goals of this study will be to: (i) evaluate Virginia's current capabilities in the commercialization of its academic research and development (R&D); (ii) assess Virginia's future opportunities and capacities for commercializing the results of its academic R&D; and (iii) develop recommendations regarding where and how the Commonwealth should direct its resources to accomplish VRIC's mandate (see II.A. below).

### II. BACKGROUND

#### A. Organizational Overview

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia is the Commonwealth's coordinating body for postsecondary education. Its statutory mission is to "advocate and promote the development and operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education ... and to lead state-level strategic planning and policy development and implementation based on research and analysis." The Council is the 13-member board of the state agency known as SCHEV. It hires the SCHEV director, who leads a small, professional staff that assists the Council with mission fulfillment and routine operations.

The *Code of Virginia* assigns the Council 29 duties, one of which is to "[a]ssist the Virginia Research Investment Committee with the administration of the Virginia Research Investment Fund consistent with the provisions of Article 8 (§ 23.1-3130 et seq.) of Chapter 31." The *Code* also establishes the Committee and designates the SCHEV director as chair. SCHEV staff are lead staff to the Committee.

The Virginia Research Investment Committee is a nine-member state board created in 2016 to "evaluate and award grants and loans from the [Virginia Research Investment] Fund." Effective July 1, 2017, VRIC's statutory mission also will include: "(i) promote research and development excellence in the Commonwealth; (ii) provide guidance, and coordination as deemed necessary, to existent efforts to support research in the Commonwealth with commercial potential; [and] (iii) approve the [Commonwealth Research and Technology Strategic] Roadmap."

#### B. Background of this Project

In pursuit of its mission to evaluate proposals for and award grants and loans from the Fund, VRIC began its work in 2016 by reviewing the landscape of existent Virginia grant programs that support academic research with commercial potential and by seeking to better understand the unique strengths, strategic advantages and emerging potentials of the Commonwealth's academic-research enterprise. The Committee also reviewed the Commonwealth Research and Technology Strategic Roadmap prepared in November 2014 by the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT).

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Members of the Committee concluded that more advanced, in-depth analyses were necessary in order to educate themselves about how and where to invest VRIF funds to best ensure return on the Commonwealth’s investment. Members also concluded that the 2014 Roadmap document was neither recent enough nor targeted enough on matters of relevance to the Committee.

As a result, legislation was introduced in the Virginia General Assembly’s 2017 session to expand VRIC’s mission, as described above. This legislation becomes law on July 1. In addition, *Chapter 836 of the 2017 Acts of Assembly* (the state budget) authorizes the Committee in Item 255 to “conduct a study that is to be an assessment of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s research assets, including those located at or within its public and private universities, federal research facilities and private sector companies.” The authorizing language posits SCHEV as the study’s coordinating body, and this RFP is SCHEV’s solicitation for a contractor to conduct the study.

### III. STATEMENT OF NEEDS

#### A. Overview

On behalf of the Virginia Research Investment Committee, the State Council of Higher Education is seeking expert assistance in assessing the Commonwealth’s research assets across its nonprofit institutions of higher education, its private-sector companies and the federal research facilities located here in order to evaluate Virginia’s current commercialization capabilities, assess its future opportunities and capacities for research commercialization, and develop recommendations on where and how the Commonwealth should direct its resources to accomplish the mandate of the Committee.

To conduct this research-asset assessment, assistance is needed with data collection, quantitative and qualitative analysis, constituent consultation, and recommendation development. This assistance may involve environmental scanning, benchmarking, assessment-metric identification and/or development, and analyses of trends, gaps, “headroom” and/or industry/network/researcher clusters. To address the Fund’s goal to “foster innovative and collaborative research, development, and commercialization efforts ... in projects and programs with a high potential for economic development and job creation opportunities,” assistance also is needed with reviewing and assessing current state and university policies, practices and regulations and then articulating changes and improvements that will facilitate achievement of this goal.

#### B. Contractor Qualifications

1. The contractor(s) shall demonstrate extensive knowledge of translational academic research and applied R&D generally; technology transfer and commercialization generally; and the span of the research and innovation ecosystem in Virginia across not only higher education, but also the private sector and the federal sector.
2. The contractor(s) shall possess direct experience in providing similar state-level consulting services and/or in collecting and cataloging/inventorying primary and secondary bibliometric data and qualitative information; convening and communicating effectively with diverse constituencies; and conducting sophisticated analyses and assessments of these inputs that result in informed projections/forecasts/strategies and meaningful recommendations.

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3. The contractor(s) shall exhibit expertise in preparing final reports targeted to professional and general audiences and in multiple forms; i.e., research paper, slide presentation, speech.
4. The contractor(s) shall employ and retain human resources sufficient to manage, coordinate, and implement the project objectives.

### C. Areas of Engagement

The contractor(s) shall furnish all labor and resources to conduct an analytic assessment of the Commonwealth's public, private and federal research assets for the purposes of evaluating Virginia's current commercialization capabilities, assessing its future opportunities and capacities for research commercialization, and developing recommendations on where and how Virginia's resources should be directed to accomplish the mandate of the Virginia Research Investment Committee. Under the direction of the SCHEV director, these services shall center upon, but not be limited to, the following areas of engagement (information in italics appears verbatim from the study mandate):

1. *Identify current public and private sector collaborations in research and commercialization.*
2. *Identify current funding streams and where Virginia may best utilize its fiscal resources to leverage federal and private sector funds.*
3. *Identify competitive efforts in similar research and commercialization initiatives in other states.* Identify current best practices nationally in state-supported R&D commercialization efforts and offer recommendations on next-generation practices and efforts.
4. *Define research and commercialization clusters.* Identify successful and/or promising research and commercialization clusters in industry, in higher education and in collaborations between sectors (public, private and federal).
5. *Determine the strengths of Virginia's commercialization capabilities.* Identify or develop appropriate metrics to assess these capabilities and employ these metrics to determine the Commonwealth's current capabilities and its future potentials and capacities.
6. *Recommend areas where Virginia may wish to direct its resources to accomplish the mandate of the Virginia Research Investment Committee.* Identify the unique strengths, strategic advantages, emerging opportunities and potential priorities (in research topics/fields and investment strategies) in Virginia academic research and commercialization.

SCHEV reserves the right to assign different areas of engagement to different contractors and to its staff. The contractor(s) reserve(s) the right to propose the assignment of some areas of engagement to one or more subcontractors.

### D. Anticipated Scope of Work and Key Deliverables

The project will be conducted in phases, each of which will be time-limited as described below. A total of four phases are anticipated, encompassing a total of eight-to-nine calendar months.

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The project will be iterative. The contractor(s) will meet with VRIC at the start of the first phase, and at the end of each phase, to reach agreement on the definitions and metrics to be used in the pending phase and/or to assess the outcomes of the prior phase.

The project will yield five key deliverables, as described below. Additional deliverables will be possible, as agreed to either in the contract based on deliverables described in the contractor's proposal or as part of any subsequent additional related work requested by SCHEV, per Item 5 below.

### 1. Phase I: Establishing the Baseline **{to be completed by Friday, September 15, 2017}**

The first phase will entail cataloging and preliminarily assessing the Commonwealth's research assets. The work will be time-limited to enable its results to inform: (i) the updating of the Commonwealth Research and Technology Strategic Roadmap (the Roadmap); (ii) the refining of the guidelines for the Commonwealth Research and Commercialization Fund (CRCF) grant competition; and (iii) the review and selection of proposals for Round 1 of the Virginia Research Investment Fund (VRIF) grant competition. Therefore, the consultant shall collaborate closely with the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT), which is responsible for the Roadmap and the CRCF, in collecting and analyzing information to avoid duplication of effort and hasten completion of each's projects.

#### a. Environmental Scan (Part I) – Cataloging of Assets

- i. Catalog Virginia's current research assets, collaborations and clusters, focusing on those most relevant and/or conducive to commercialization.
- ii. Catalog those Virginia-based researchers employed by public and private universities, private companies and federal research facilities who conduct research in applied and/or translational fields with commercial potential.
- iii. Identify relevant state-level initiatives and/or best practices in research and commercialization in other states and compare to Virginia.

#### b. Gap Analysis (Part I) – "Shallow Dive"

Conduct a first-order analysis of the size and nature of deficiencies in: (i) Virginia's commercialization capabilities; (ii) existing, or missed opportunities for, research and commercialization clusters and/or collaborations; (iii) all current funding streams (including non-routine sources) and/or coordination between these funding streams/sources; and (iv) Virginia's research infrastructure and/or expertise.

#### c. Initial Assessment of Assets – Preliminary "Headroom" Analysis

- i. Synthesize the information collected in 1.a. and the results of the analyses in 1.b. to yield a preliminary identification and assessment of the unique strengths, strategic advantages, emerging opportunities and potential priorities in Virginia academic research and commercialization.

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- ii. Deliver a summary report [**Key Deliverable #1**] of the above activities and findings to VRIC by Friday, September 15, 2017.

### 2. Phase II: Charting the Course Forward {to be completed by Friday, November 3, 2017}

The second phase will couple the results of Phase I with additional information and analyses to yield a more in-depth, longer-term, forward-looking assessment of the Commonwealth's research enterprise and commercialization capabilities. This phase will be time-limited to enable VRIC to consider the consultant's summary report as the Committee makes its selections in November 2017 of public universities' proposals for Round 1 of the VRIF grant competition. Therefore the consultant shall collaborate closely with SCHEV in completing the activities of this phase.

#### a. Environmental Scan (Part II)

Review existing state and university policies, practices and regulations regarding academic research and the commercialization thereof, as well as state-funded grant programs in support thereof.

#### b. Gap Analysis (Part II) – “Deep Dive”

Using the results of 2.a., conduct a second-order analysis of the size and nature of deficiencies in: (i) Virginia's commercialization capabilities; (ii) existing, or missed opportunities for, research and commercialization clusters and/or collaborations; (iii) all current funding streams (including non-routine sources) and/or coordination between these funding streams/sources; and (iv) Virginia's research infrastructure and/or expertise.

#### c. Targeted Assessment of Assets – Overall “Headroom” Analysis

- i. Develop and employ appropriate metrics to assess Virginia's commercialization capabilities and, to the extent possible, estimate the timing for commercialization of outcomes from different research areas/foci.
- ii. Synthesize the results of Phase II activities to yield a full assessment of the unique strengths, strategic advantages, emerging opportunities and potential priorities in Virginia academic research and commercialization.
- iii. Deliver a summary report [**Key Deliverable #2**] of the above activities and findings to VRIC by Friday, November 3, 2017.

### 3. Phase III: Developing Recommendations {to be completed by Friday, January 5, 2018}

The third phase will involve using the prior phases' results to develop recommendations regarding: (i) research areas/foci on which the Commonwealth should consider placing emphasis, priority and resources; and (ii) strategies Virginia should consider employing to target its resources and support toward these research areas/foci and the commercialization thereof. Insofar as possible, the consultant shall solicit and incorporate the input of constituents from across the public- and private-sector research and commercialization

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space in developing these recommendations. The consultant shall complete this phase in time to inform the 2018 General Assembly and the next Governor of Virginia.

- a. Develop recommendations on priority research areas and on strategies for targeting awards from the VRIF, and state resources generally, to best ensure the commercialization of academic research and to best accomplish the mandate of the Virginia Research Investment Committee.
- b. Deliver a summary report [**Key Deliverable #3**] of consultant's recommendations, and a full report of the project [**Key Deliverable #4**], to VRIC by Friday, January 5, 2018.

#### 4. Phase IV: Presenting Recommendations {to be completed by Friday, March 31, 2018}

The final phase will consist of assisting the SCHEV director with presentation of the project's recommendations and salient findings in written, electronic, and oral form [**Key Deliverable #5**] to the Council, the Committee and relevant constituents and stakeholders through Friday, March 31, 2018.

#### 5. Additional Related Work

Any additional related work shall be optional and at the discretion of SCHEV, on a time and materials (T&M) basis as needed and requested by SCHEV on behalf of the VRIC.

- a. SCHEV may require additional work related to this overall project that is not defined in Phases I-IV. The offeror shall provide labor category pricing for additional related work on a T&M basis in accordance with the pricing schedule.
- b. Procedures for ordering additional work:
  - i. Any requests for additional work will be initiated by SCHEV issuing a Request for Quotation with a proposed Statement of Work to the contractor. The contractor shall issue a quote in response to a SCHEV request indicating the number of hours of each labor category required to complete the work called for in the Statement of Work. Only upon written acceptance of the quote and issuance of signed Statement of Work from SCHEV may the contractor commence any additional related work. The contractor's quote shall be based on SCHEV's scope of work and the contract terms, conditions and pricing. The contractor's pricing on a quote shall not exceed the rates established in the contract pricing schedule.
  - ii. The contractor shall also provide within the quote an estimate for any travel expenses that will be required to complete the Statement of Work. All travel expenses must comply with the current state travel regulations contained in the Commonwealth Accounting Policies and Procedures (CAPP) Manual topic 20335 available on [www.doa.virginia.gov](http://www.doa.virginia.gov). Travel reimbursement will only be made to the contractor for travel included in the scope of work and

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approved in advance by SCHEV. The contractor’s hourly labor rates will not be paid for the travel time of a contractor or subcontractor.

- iii. Upon acceptance of the quote, SCHEV will issue an eVA purchase order for the specific additional related work. The contractor may not exceed the number of hours and/or total cost of the Statement of Work without the prior written approval of SCHEV in the form of a change order to the Statement of Work and a corresponding change to the eVA purchase order.

**IV. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

**A. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

{tbd}

**B. SPECIFIC PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS**

{tbd}

**V. EVALUATION AND AWARD CRITERIA**

**A. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Proposals shall be evaluated by the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) using the following criteria and weights:

<u>Criterion:</u>	<u>Weight:</u>
1. Specific methodology and plans proposed to provide the services for this project	35
2. Experience and qualifications of the offeror and of the personnel proposed for this project	30
3. Proposed price (Minimum, \$100,000; Maximum, none)	15
4. Small Business Subcontracting Plan	20
TOTAL	100

**B. AWARD OF CONTRACT**

On behalf of the Commonwealth, SCHEV shall engage in individual discussions with two or more offerors deemed fully qualified, responsible and suitable on the basis of initial responses and with emphasis on professional competence, to provide the required services.

Repetitive informal interviews shall be permissible. Such offerors shall be encouraged to elaborate on their qualifications and performance data or staff expertise pertinent to the proposed project, as

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well as alternative concepts. At the discussion stage, SCHEV may discuss non-binding estimates of total project costs, including but not limited to non-binding estimates of price for services. Proprietary information from competing offerors shall not be disclosed to the public or to competitors.

At the conclusion of the informal interviews, on the basis of evaluation factors published in the Request for Proposal and all information developed in the selection process to this point, SCHEV shall select, in the order of preference, two or more offerors whose professional qualifications and proposed services are deemed most meritorious.

Negotiations then shall be conducted, beginning with the offeror ranked first. If a contract satisfactory to SCHEV and advantageous to the Commonwealth can be negotiated at a price considered fair and reasonable, the award shall be made to that offeror. Otherwise, negotiations with the offeror ranked first shall be formally terminated and negotiations conducted with the offeror ranked second, and so on, until such a contract can be negotiated at a fair and reasonable price.

SCHEV reserves the right to make multiple awards as a result of this solicitation.

Should SCHEV determine in writing and in its sole discretion that only one offeror is fully qualified, or that one offeror is clearly more highly qualified and suitable than the others under consideration, a contract may be negotiated and awarded to that offeror.

SCHEV also reserves the right to request that the offeror(s) submit in writing a Best and Final Offer (BAFO). After a BAFO is submitted, no further negotiations shall be conducted with the offeror. The offeror's proposal shall be re-scored to combine and include the information contained in the BAFO. The decision to award shall be based on the final evaluation including the BAFO.

### **VI. REPORTING AND DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS**

### **VII. PREPROPOSAL CONFERENCE**

### **VIII. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **IX. SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **X. METHOD OF PAYMENT**

### **XI. PRICING SCHEDULE**

### **XII. ATTACHMENTS**