STATEMENT OF WORK
Deep Time: Educational Experiences for Classrooms

1. Project Summary
The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) seeks a contractor to work with the education team at NMNH to develop prototype educational experiences for a K-12 audience on topics such as time, evolution, ecosystem change and earth processes. The contractor will develop dynamic, succinct, and clear educational content for use in a classroom or informal learning setting as part of the Deep Time Initiative. The experiences that result from this contract will be heavily tested with the audience, delivered online and used by educators in classrooms across the United States and in informal learning environments. Critical elements of the contract include developing a means to deliver the experiences digitally and problem-solving around using Museum collections and science in the learning experience.

The contractor works under the direction of the Manager of Deep Time Education and Outreach who will guide and have responsibility for content and experience conceptualization. The contractor will work with a team of technical experts, educators and scientists to create and test prototype educational experiences for a K-12 audience. These experiences should be inquiry-based, problem or challenge-based, and use the Museum’s collections and science as a basis. Given the learning context of a classroom or informal environment, the experiences should be designed such that an educator could deliver them as part of a program in less than an hour. The contractor will work with content drawn from a variety of sources, including staff, collections, websites, scientific journals and partners and will assist with maintaining digital and physical files and assets, including tracking copyrights and scientific vetting.

This project is part of multi-year program within the Deep Time Initiative which focuses on how Earth’s 4.6 billion-year history is connected to the present and future of life on Earth.

2. Context: Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History
The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W. in Washington, D.C., is the most-visited natural history museum in the world. Opened in 1910, the green-domed museum on the National Mall is dedicated to maintaining and preserving the world’s most extensive collection of natural history specimens and cultural artifacts. It fosters significant scientific research and educational programs and exhibitions that present the work of its scientists to the public.

The museum is regarded as a global leader in natural history collections, collections-based research, scientific discovery, and natural history exhibition. The current and ongoing restructuring of the Office of Education & Outreach is part of an institution-wide effort to promote the education and outreach activities of the museum to the rigor and renown of its science activities. A related intent is to advance the impact that the museum has on its visitors and on the field of museum education, particularly the integration of research and practice in an institutional setting.
3. **Context: Deep Time**
The Deep Time Initiative carries the important message that the Earth’s distant past is connected to the present and shapes our future. Life and the Earth have always changed together and affected one another. Today, humans are agents of this change and will continue to be in the future. We recognize that we have an opportunity to help the public personally connect to these ideas and embrace the opportunity to become citizens for a changing planet through the deep time perspective.

We believe that the National Museum of Natural History is uniquely positioned to be a leader in engaging the public in the Deep Time themes and research given our unique approach to connecting the past to the present and future and national reach. We can accomplish this by creating a pathway of engagement that cuts across age, location, interest and ability level and uses all the platforms available to the Museum and its public. Our approach will engage visitors where they are—onsite, online or in the community—to bring awareness and understanding of how the past informs the present and the future.

**Overarching Themes/Messages**
- Earth’s distant past is connected to the present and shapes our future.
- All life is connected – past, present, and future – to all other life and to the Earth itself.
- Evolution: Life is continually changing through time.
- Ecosystem Change: Ecosystems changed through time and continue to do so.
- Earth Processes: Geological processes and global cycles cause ecosystem and evolutionary changes.
- Human Connections: Our bodies record the 3.8-billion-year story of evolutionary change and the interactions between life and our planet.
- Anthropocene: Humans have a large-scale impact on our planet – larger than any other single species. We are affecting global systems more rapidly than ever before. We have the ability to learn from the past to take action in the present. What will our future impact be?

4. **Deliverables**
The deliverables for this contract are provided below.

- Three inquiry-based, problem or challenge-based experiences that can be used in a classroom or informal learning environment and can be delivered online to a national audience. Shall include all written text, diagrams, graphics, vetted and rights-cleared images and any other assets that make up the three experiences. Text shall be concisely written, scientifically vetted information such as time, evolution, ecosystem change and planetary processes.
- Three instructional guides for educators on the use of these experiences in the classroom or informal learning environment such that instructors anywhere can easily create the learning experience.
- Documentation of scientific and educational vetting and rights clearances.
In preparing the deliverables described, the contractor will be engaged in the following tasks under the direction of relevant staff from the Office of Education & Outreach:

- Research, edit, and write text about subjects especially time, evolution, ecosystem change and planetary processes for online products.
- Research and choose appropriate Museum research and collections upon which to build the educational experiences.
- Collaborate with digital experience developers, web developers, scientists and educators to create audience appropriate K-12 experiences.
- Collaborate with digital experience developers to test and refine experiences with target audience.
- Communicate and coordinate with relevant scientific staff at NMNH and its partners to develop educational experiences.
- Coordinate with education team to gather and develop content.
- Ensure that the content receives the appropriate review and revision by experts, using established procedures.
- Research, acquire and edit (crop, color adjustment) photographs.
- Research, edit and create images, graphs, charts, maps, and other resources.
- Research and acquire video, audio, and links related to topics.

5. Qualifications
The contractor is expected to have a broad understanding of biology or paleobiology; experience developing educational programs or products for a K-12 audience and that meet the needs of a teacher in that learning environment; and excellent research, writing and editing skills.

Offerors are expected to have, at minimum, the following:

- Broad knowledge of biology or paleobiology especially time, evolution, ecosystem change and planetary processes.
- Experience developing educational programs or products for K-12 audiences.
- Experience writing science content for K-12 audiences.

Additional relevant skills and/or experience include:

- Instructional design and development.
- Familiarity with Next Generation Science Standards.
- Knowledge of collections-based learning.
- Writing or development of programming for collections-based natural history science.

6. Scope and Timeframe
All project activities and deliverables will begin no later than February 23, 2015 and be completed no later than August 31, 2015. It is expected the majority of work will be done between February and June with occasional consultation during the testing and refining
stage needed July-August. It is also expected the contractor will need to dedicate up to 15-20 hours a week on this project during the majority of the contract. The nature of the deliverables demands that a large portion of this work will be conducted onsite at the NMNH, in an office environment.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS:

General. On or before 5:00 PM in the vendor’s time zone on February 2, 2015, Offerors will be expected to provide a proposal via email to NMNHeducation@si.edu.

At the minimum, offerors need to demonstrate that they meet the acceptability standards for non-cost factors, including that they have the ability to perform the requirements in a timely manner.

Technical Proposal (Maximum 10 pages, not including resume)

The Technical Proposal shall address the Statement of Work and Deliverables sections outlined above; and shall contain sufficient quantitative and qualitative details to allow a complete and accurate evaluation from a strictly technical viewpoint. When preparing their technical proposals, Offerors should consider the evaluation criteria set forth below, against which the proposals will be evaluated

a) Plan of Accomplishment

The offeror shall provide a thorough narrative explanation of the method and/or approach to the content and deliverables, and how they will proceed with the project to ensure it is completed on time. The offeror shall describe their plan for completing all work requested, being mindful to address every aspect of the work described above.

A schedule of deadlines for deliverables should be included in the proposal, including those identified above in the Deliverables section and any additional key deadlines proposed by the offeror, including those for NMNH staff. Final schedule will be negotiated based on coordination between the proposal and the Museum’s strategic timelines. All activities must be completed by August 31, 2015.

b) Capability to Perform

The offeror shall specifically address capability and capacity to perform the work required for this project including examples, considering its size, scope and schedule. The offeror shall specifically address current capability, capacity and ability to complete this project considering the schedule.

c) Staffing

The offeror shall provide resumes of key personnel or resume of individual offeror if an individual proposal. Resumes should state experience as it relates to this project.

d) Experience
The offeror shall provide examples of specialized experience and demonstrated technical competence in performing similar work as requested herein, preferably completed within the last five years.

**Cost Proposal**
Cost Proposals shall address pricing of the work as requested herein. The price proposals shall be all-inclusive. Cost proposals should include costs broken down and justified according to specific categories of deliverables, as indicated in section 4, “Deliverables,” above.

**Proposal Evaluation**
Proposals shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria being applied to the information requested above:

“Plan of Accomplishment” and “Capability to Perform” shall be granted equal weight and shall together be granted more weight than “Staffing,” and “Experience.” “Staffing” and “Experience of the Firm” shall be granted equal weight. All evaluation factors other than cost, when combined, are granted more weight than cost.

Award of a contract shall be made to the responsive, responsible offeror, whose combined cost and technical proposal is, in the opinion of the Contracting Officer, determined to be the most advantageous and in the best interest of the Smithsonian Institution.

**Inquiries**
Inquiries regarding this Request for Proposal should be directed via email to NMNHeducation@si.edu.

**Interviews**
It is the intention of the Smithsonian to interview a select group of responsive offerors; however, it is possible that interviews may not occur. Consequently, it is important that all responses to this request be complete and include all necessary information.

**Submission of Proposals**
The Smithsonian reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to this request, and to negotiate separately with any offeror when such action shall be considered by the Contracting Officer to be in the best interest of the Smithsonian. After limited negotiations or based solely on initial offers received, notice will be provided indicating that an award may be made. It is therefore emphasized that all proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms that the offeror can submit. Written proposals must be received 5:00 PM in the offeror’s time zone, on February 2, 2015.

**Disposition of Proposals**
All information submitted in response to this Request for Proposal shall become the property of the Smithsonian and shall not be returned.

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