

**SOUTH WESTERN REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, with possible two (2) additional two (2) year renewals.

The South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) invites proposals from qualified independent public accounting firms or accountants, in accordance with the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes, to conduct an examination and to render an opinion on the comprehensive annual financial statements of the Agency. Three copies of each proposal may be hand-delivered by Federal Express, UPS, or U.S. Mail to:

Dr. Floyd Lapp, FAICP
Executive Director
South Western Regional Planning Agency
888 Washington Blvd., 3rd Floor
Stamford, CT 06901

The deadline for submission of proposals is 4:00 PM, **Friday, March 12, 2010**, at which time no further proposals will be considered. This RFP can also be viewed on SWRPA's web site: www.swrpa.org under "Employment."

All questions and correspondence should be directed to:

Mrs. Patricia Payne
Office and Financial Administrator
South Western Regional Planning Agency
888 Washington Blvd., 3rd Floor
Stamford, CT 06901
Telephone: (203) 316-5190
Fax: (203) 316-4995
Email: payne@swrpa.org

**SOUTH WESTERN REGIONAL
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
PROFESSIONAL AUDITING SERVICES
(Insert date of release of RFP)**

DRAFT

SOUTH WESTERN REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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**SOUTH WESTERN REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

1. INTRODUCTION

A. General Information

The South Western Regional Planning Agency is a governmental agency formed and operating under the provisions of Title 8, Chapter 127 of the Connecticut General Statutes. It was organized in 1962 when representatives of five municipalities recognized the need for regional cooperation and coordination, believing that many community issues extend beyond municipal boundaries and require joint action.

SWRPA is now the official regional planning organization for eight municipalities in lower Fairfield County, including Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport, and Wilton.

SWRPA is one of fifteen planning regions in Connecticut as defined by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management and brings together its eight member municipalities to coordinate planning for the Region's future.

The South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) is requesting proposals from qualified firms of certified public accountants to audit its financial statements for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2010, with the option of auditing its financial statements for two (2) additional two (2) year renewals. These audits are to be performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, the standards set forth for financial audits in the U.S. General Accounting Office's (GAO) Government Auditing Standards (Yellow Book), the provisions of the federal Single Audit Act of 1984 (as amended in 1996) and U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations and the provisions of Sections 4-230 through 4-236 of the Connecticut General Statutes concerning the State Single Audit Act. In addition SWRPA is requesting a copy of the latest results of the bidder's external quality control review.

There is no expressed or implied obligation for SWRPA to reimburse responding firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this request.

To be considered, a master copy (so marked) and two (2) copies of a proposal must be received by Floyd Lapp, Executive Director, as noted on page one (1) by 4:00PM on Friday, March 12, 2010. SWRPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted where it may serve SWRPA's best interest.

Proposals submitted will be evaluated by SWRPA's Finance Committee, appointed by the Board of Directors. Appointment of the Independent Auditor will be made by the full Board of Directors.

During the evaluation process, the Finance Committee reserves the right, where it may serve SWRPA's best interest, to request additional information or clarifications from proposers, or to allow corrections of errors or omissions. At the discretion of SWRPA or the Finance Committee, firms submitting proposals may be requested to make oral presentations as part of the evaluation process.

SWRPA reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any ideas in a proposal regardless of whether that proposal is selected. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the firm of the conditions contained in this request for proposals, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between SWRPA and the firm selected.

B. Term of Engagement

A one-year contract is contemplated, subject to an annual performance review with the option of two (2) additional two (2) year renewal terms.

II. NATURE OF SERVICES REQUIRED

A. General

SWRPA is soliciting the services of qualified firms of certified public accountants to audit its financial statements for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2010, with the option to renew for two (2) additional two (2) year renewals each. These audits are to be performed in accordance with the provisions contained in this request for proposals.

B. Scope of Work to be Performed

SWRPA desires the auditor to express an opinion on the fair presentation of its basic financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

The auditor is to provide an "in-relation-to" report on the combining and individual fund financial statements and supporting schedules based on the auditing procedures applied during the audit of the basic financial statements.

The auditor shall also be responsible for performing certain limited procedures involving required supplementary information required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board.

C. Auditing Standards To Be Followed

To meet the requirements of this request for proposals, the audit shall be performed in accordance with generally accepting auditing standards as set forth by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the standards for financial audits set forth in the U.S. General Accounting Office's Government Auditing Standards (2003), the provisions of the Single Audit Act of 1984 (as amended in 1996) and the provisions of U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations and the provisions of Sections 4-230 through 4-236 of the Connecticut General Statutes concerning the State Single Audit Act.

D. Reports to be Issued

Following the completion of the audit of the fiscal year's financial statements, the auditor shall issue all reports as are appropriate and required by generally accepted auditing standards, the standards set forth for financial audits in the U.S. General Accounting Office's (GAO) Government Auditing Standards (2003), the provisions of the Federal Single Audit Act of 1984 (as amended in 1996) and U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133 Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations and the provisions of Sections 4-230 through 4-236, and 7-324 of the Connecticut General Statutes concerning the State Single Audit Act.

In the required reports on internal controls, the auditor shall communicate any reportable conditions found during the audit. A reportable condition shall be defined as a significant deficiency in the design or operation of the internal control structure, which could adversely affect the organization's ability to record, process, summarize and report financial data consistent with the assertions of management in the financial statements. Reportable conditions that are also material weaknesses shall be identified as such in the report.

The audit firm shall issue a separate management letter that includes recommendations for improvements in internal control that are considered to be non-reportable conditions.

The reports on compliance shall include all material instances of noncompliance. All nonmaterial instances of noncompliance shall be reported in a separate management letter, which shall be referred to in the reports on compliance.

Reporting to the Board of Directors. Auditors shall assure themselves that SWRPA's Board of Directors is informed of each of the following:

1. The auditor's responsibility under generally accepted auditing standards.

2. Significant accounting policies.
3. Difficulties encountered in performing the audit.

E. Special Considerations

1. SWRPA currently anticipates it will prepare one or more official statements in connection with the sale of debt securities (if applicable), which will contain the basic financial statements and the auditor's report thereon. The auditor shall be required, if requested by the fiscal advisor and/or the underwriter, to issue a "consent and citation of expertise" as the auditor and any necessary "comfort letters."
2. SWRPA was defined as a political subdivision of the State of Connecticut under the provisions of GASB Statement 34 and therefore, the financial statements issued for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2010 reflect the requirements of this standard. It is expected that the auditors will provide guidance and/or assistance to SWRPA to continue to meet the requirements of GASB Statement 34.
3. The schedules of expenditures of federal awards and state financial assistance and related auditor's reports, as well as the reports on the internal controls and compliance are not to be included in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, but are to be issued separately.

F. Implied Requirements

All services not specifically mentioned in this request for proposals that are necessary to provide the functional capabilities described by the auditor shall be included in the Scope of Services.

G. Working Paper Retention and Access to Working Papers

All working papers and reports must be retained, at the auditor's expense, for a minimum of five (5) years, unless the firm is notified in writing by SWRPA of the need to extend the retention period. The auditor will be required to make working papers available, upon request, to the following parties or their designees:

SWRPA Municipalities
Federal Single Audit Cognizant Agency
U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO)

Parties designated by the federal or state governments or by SWRPA as part of an audit quality review process

Auditors of entities of which SWRPA is a sub-recipient of grant funds.

In addition, the firm shall respond to the reasonable inquiries of successor auditors and allow successor auditors to review working papers relating to matters of continuing accounting significance.

III. DESCRIPTION OF SWRPA

A. Name and Telephone Number of Contact Persons/Organizational Chart/Location of Offices:

The auditor's principal contact with SWRPA will be Patricia Payne, Office and Financial Administrator, or a designated representative, who will coordinate the assistance to be provided by SWRPA to the auditor.

An organizational chart (Appendix A) is attached.

B. Background Information

The South Western Regional Planning Agency is a governmental agency formed and operating under the provisions of Title 8, Chapter 127 of the Connecticut General Statutes. It was organized in 1962 when representatives of five municipalities recognized the need for regional cooperation and coordination, believing that many community issues extend beyond municipal boundaries and require joint action. The fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. SWRPA receives contributions from its member municipalities as well as state and federal funding to conduct locally administered long-range planning and transportation studies for the Region.

More detailed information on SWRPA and its finances can be found in the Annual Report posted on SWRPA's website, www.swrpa.org.

SWRPA's Mission Statement: The South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) is dedicated to preserving and improving the quality of life and economic vitality in southwestern Connecticut. SWRPA focuses on issues of transportation, housing, environment and open space and provides a forum for local governments to foster communication and collaboration in addressing inter-municipal issues and needs.

C. Budgetary Basis of Accounting

SWRPA prepares its budgets on an accrual basis for both governmental and proprietary funds.

D. Pension Plans

SWRPA participates or offers the following pension plans:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Employees Covered</u>
Single employer defined benefit	All employees who work 1,000 hrs. annually
457 Contribution Plan	Participating employees (elective) (no employer contribution)

Actuarial services for the single employer defined benefit pension plan are provided by YBH Retirement Services, Farmington, CT.

E. Computer Systems – SWRPA uses proprietary *PeachTree* accounting software as its general accounting system, which includes general ledger, payroll (in coordination with outside payroll company), payables, receivables, purchasing and utility billing modules.

F. Availability of Prior Audit Reports

Interested firms who wish to review prior years' audit reports and management letters should contact Patricia Payne via email at payne@swrpa.org.

IV. TIME REQUIREMENTS

A. Proposal Calendar

The following is a list of key dates up to and including the date proposals are to be submitted:

Submission of Proposals by 4:00PM 3/12/2010

B. Date Audit May Commence

SWRPA will have all records ready for audit and all management personnel available to meet with the firm's personnel as of August 1, 2010.

C. Schedule for the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year Audit (a similar time schedule will be developed for audits of future fiscal years if SWRPA exercises its

option for additional audits). The auditor shall provide the SWRPA by June 30, 2010 a detailed audit plan and a list of schedules to be prepared by SWRPA.

D. Date Final Report is Due

SWRPA shall prepare draft financial statements, notes and all required supplementary schedules and statistical data by August 1, 2010. The auditor shall provide all recommendations, revisions and suggestions for improvement and a draft of the auditor's report to the SWRPA Finance Committee and the Executive Director by October 22, 2010.

The Finance Committee will complete their review of the draft report as expeditiously as possible. During that period, the auditor should be available for any meetings that may be necessary to discuss the audit reports. Once all issues for discussion are resolved, the final signed report shall be delivered to the Executive Director within ten (10) working days. It is anticipated that this process will be completed and the final report delivered by November 15th or earlier if possible.

The final report and ten (10) signed copies should be delivered to the Executive Director, 888 Washington Blvd., 3rd Floor, Stamford, CT.

The Independent Auditor will be required to formally present the financial report and the auditor's opinion to the SWRPA Executive Committee sometime in early November.

V. ASSISTANCE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE AUDITOR AND REPORT PREPARATION

A. Support Assistance

Patricia Payne, Office and Financial Administrator and responsible management personnel will be available during the audit to assist the firm by providing information, documentation and explanations. The preparation of confirmations will be the responsibility of the auditor. In addition, minimal hours of clerical support will be made available to the auditor for the preparation of routine letters and memoranda.

B. Electronic Data Processing (EDP) Assistance

Ms. Payne will be available to provide systems documentation and explanations. The auditor will be provided computer time and the use of the SWRPA's computer hardware and software for inquiry.

C. Statements and Schedules to be Prepared by SWRPA

The financial administrator will prepare all required statements and schedules for the auditor.

D. Work Area, Telephones, Photocopying and FAX Machines

SWRPA will provide the auditor with reasonable work space, desks and chairs. The auditor will also be provided with access to a telephone line, photocopying facilities and FAX machine.

E. Report Preparation: Report printing shall be the responsibility of the auditor.

VI. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

A. General Requirements

1. Inquiries

Inquiries concerning the request for proposals and the subject of the request for proposals must be made to:

Patricia Payne
Office and Financial Administrator
South Western Regional Planning Agency
888 Washington Blvd., 3rd Floor
Stamford, CT 06901
Telephone: (203) 316-5190
Fax: (203) 316-4995
Email: payne@swrpa.org

2. Submission of Proposals

The following material is required to be received by 4:00PM on March 12, 2010 for a proposing firm to be considered:

- a. A master copy (so marked) of a Technical Proposal and two (2) copies to include the following:

- (1) Title Page

Title page showing the request for proposals subject; the firm's name; the name, address and telephone number of the contact person; and the date of the proposal.

(2) Table of Contents

(3) Transmittal Letter

A signed letter of transmittal briefly stating the proposer's understanding of the work to be done, the commitment to perform the work within the time period, a statement why the firm believes itself to be best qualified to perform the engagement and a statement that the proposal is a firm and irrevocable offer for 90 days.

- b. The proposer shall submit an original and two (2) copies of a dollar cost bid in a separate sealed envelope marked as follows:

SEALED DOLLAR COST BID PROPOSAL
FOR THE
SOUTH WESTERN REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
FOR
PROFESSIONAL AUDITING SERVICES
FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010

B. Technical Proposal

1. General Requirements

The purpose of the Technical Proposal is to demonstrate the qualifications, competence and capacity of the firms seeking to undertake an independent audit of SWRPA in conformity with the requirements of this request for proposals. As such, the substance of proposals will carry more weight than their form or manner of presentation. The Technical Proposal should demonstrate the qualifications of the firm and of the particular staff to be assigned to this engagement. It should also specify an audit approach that will meet the request for proposals requirements.

THERE SHOULD BE NO DOLLAR UNITS OR TOTAL COSTS INCLUDED IN THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL DOCUMENT.

The Technical Proposal should address all the points outlined in the request for proposals (excluding any cost information which should only be included in the sealed dollar cost bid). The Proposal should be prepared simply and economically, providing a

straightforward, concise description of the proposer's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the request for proposals. While additional data may be presented, the following subjects, items Nos. 2 through 6, must be included. They represent the criteria against which the proposal will be evaluated.

2. Independence

The firm should provide an affirmative statement that it is independent of SWRPA as defined by generally accepted auditing standards and the U.S. General Accounting Office's Government Auditing Standards (2003).

The firm should also list and describe the firm's professional relationships involving SWRPA together with a statement explaining why such relationship does not constitute a conflict of interest relative to performing the proposed audit.

3. License to Practice in Connecticut

An affirmative statement should be included that the firm and/or its partners are properly licensed to practice in Connecticut and all supervisory staff are licensed or qualified to be licensed to practice in Connecticut.

4. Firm Qualifications and Experience

The proposer should state the size of the firm, the size of the firm's governmental audit staff, the location of the office from which the work on this engagement is to be performed and the number and nature of the professional staff to be employed in this engagement on a full-time basis and the number and nature of the staff to be so employed on a part-time basis.

The firm is also required to submit a copy of the report on its most recent external quality control review, with a statement whether that quality control review included a review of specific government engagements.

The firm shall also provide information on the results of any federal or state desk reviews or field reviews of its audits during the past three (3) years. In addition, the firm shall provide information on the circumstances and status of any disciplinary action taken or pending against the firm during the past three (3) years with state regulatory bodies or professional organizations.

5. Partner, Supervisory and Staff Qualifications and Experience

Identify the principal supervisory and management staff, including engagement partners, managers, other supervisors and specialists, who would be assigned to the engagement. Indicate whether each such person is registered or licensed to practice as a certified public accountant in Connecticut. Provide information on the government auditing experience of each person, including information on relevant continuing professional education for the past three (3) years and membership in professional organizations relevant to the performance of this audit.

Other audit personnel may be changed at the discretion of the proposer provided that replacements have substantially the same or better qualifications or experience.

6. Similar Engagements With Other Government Entities (including SWRPA)

For the firm's office that will be assigned responsibility for the audit, list the most significant engagements (maximum – 3) performed in the last five (5) years that are similar to the engagement described in this request for proposal. This must include one engagement with a government entity that has implemented the requirements of Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement 34. This must also include at least one report which has been awarded the GFOA Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting within the last two years.

These engagements should be ranked on the basis of total staff hours. Indicate the scope of work, date, engagement partners, total hours, and the name and telephone number of the principal client contact.

C. Sealed Dollar Cost Bid

1. Total All-Inclusive Maximum Price

The sealed dollar cost bid should contain all pricing information relative to performing the audit engagement as described in this request for proposal. The total all-inclusive maximum price to be bid is to contain all direct and indirect costs including all out-of-pocket expenses.

SWRPA will not be responsible for expenses incurred in preparing and submitting the technical proposal or the sealed dollar cost bid. Such costs should not be included in the proposal.

The first page of the sealed dollar cost bid should include the following information:

- a. Name of Firm
 - b. Certification that the person signing the proposal is entitled to represent the firm, empowered to submit the bid, and authorized to sign a contract with SWRPA.
 - c. A Total All-Inclusive Maximum Price for all one (1) year and two (2) two (2) year renewals referred to in this request for proposal.
2. Out-of-pocket Expenses Included in the Total All-inclusive Maximum Price

All out-of-pocket expenses should be included on Appendix D.

3. Rates for Additional Professional Services

If it should become necessary for SWRPA to request the auditor to render any additional services to either supplement the services requested in this RFP or to perform additional work as a result of the specific recommendations included in any report issued on this engagement, then such additional work shall be performed only if set forth in an addendum to the contract between SWRPA and the firm. Any such additional work agreed to between SWRPA and the firm shall be performed at the same rates set forth in the schedule of fees and expenses included in the sealed dollar cost bid.

4. Manner of Payment: Full fee to be paid upon completion of audit.

VII. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A. Audit Committee

Proposals submitted will be evaluated by the SWRPA Finance Committee selected by the Board of Directors.

B. Review of Proposals

The Finance Committee will use a point formula during the review process to score proposals. The SWRPA Executive Committee will convene to review and discuss these evaluations and to combine the individual scores to arrive at a composite technical score for each firm. At this point, firms with an unacceptably low technical score will be eliminated from further consideration.

After the composite technical score for each firm has been established, the sealed dollar cost bid will be opened and additional points will be added to the technical score based on the price bid. The highest score of all proposers will be assigned to the firm offering the lowest total all-inclusive maximum price. Appropriate fractional scores will be assigned to other proposers.

SWRPA reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and use any idea in a proposal regardless of whether that proposal is selected.

C. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using three (3) sets of criteria. Firms meeting the mandatory criteria will have their proposals evaluated and scored for both technical qualifications and price. The following represent the principal selection criteria which will be considered during the evaluation process:

1. Mandatory Elements
 - a. The audit firm is independent and licensed to practice in Connecticut.
 - b. The firm has no conflict of interest with regard to any other work performed by the firm for SWRPA.
 - c. The firm adheres to the instructions in this request for proposal on preparing and submitting the proposal.
 - d. The firm submits a copy of its last external quality control review report and the firm has a record of quality audit work.
 - e. The firm shall submit one copy of at least two comprehensive annual financial reports issued by Connecticut municipalities in which their opinion is contained.
2. Technical Quality
 - a. Expertise and Experience

- (1) The firm's past experience and performance on comparable government engagements.
- (2) The quality of the firm's professional personnel to be assigned to the engagement and the quality of the firm's management support personnel to be available for technical consultation.
- (3) Experience with the preparation of federal and state financial assistance and related reports.
- (4) Experience in providing assistance to meet the requirements of the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting program.

b. Audit Approach

- (1) Adequacy of proposed staffing plan for various segments of the engagement.
- (2) Adequacy of sampling techniques.
- (3) Adequacy of analytical procedures.

3. Price:

COST WILL NOT BE THE ONLY FACTOR IN THE SELECTION OF AN AUDIT FIRM

D. Oral Presentations

During the evaluation process, the Finance Committee may, at its discretion, request any one or all firms to make oral presentations. Such presentations will provide firms with an opportunity to answer any questions the Finance Committee may have on a firm's proposal. Not all firms may be asked to make such oral presentations.

E. Final Selection

The Executive Committee will select a firm based upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee. It is anticipated that a firm will be selected by April 15, 2010.

F. Right to Reject Proposals

Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the firm of the conditions contained in this request for proposal unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between SWRPA and the firm selected.

SWRPA reserves the right without prejudice to reject any or all proposals.

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APPENDICES

- A. Organizational Chart
- B. Proposer Guarantees
- C. Proposer Warranties
- D. Format for Schedule of Professional Fees and Expenses to Support the Total All-inclusive Maximum Price

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APPENDIX A

SWRPA Organizational Chart

SWRPA's 22-Member Board of Directors

Elected Officers for 2010

Chairman, Paul Settelmeyer

Vice Chairman, Gerald Ellis

Secretary, Jack Halpert

Treasurer, Henry Boucher

SWRPA Staff

Dr. Floyd Lapp, Executive Director

Sue Prosi, Senior Regional Transportation Coordinator

Alex Karman, Senior Transportation Planner

Craig Lader, Senior Transportation Planner

Nicole Davis, Regional Planner

Patricia Payne, Office and Financial Administrator

Lisa Pelazza, Administrative Assistant

Margaret Mixon, Special Projects Assistant Planner

Jesica Youngblood, GIS Analyst

APPENDIX B

PROPOSER GUARANTEES

The proposer certifies it can and will provide and make available, as a minimum, all services set forth in Section II, Nature of Services Required.

Signature of Official: _____

Name (typed): _____

Title: _____

Firm: _____

Date: _____

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APPENDIX C

PROPOSER WARRANTIES

- A. Proposer warrants that it is willing and able to comply with State of Connecticut laws with respect to foreign (non-state of Connecticut) corporations.
- B. Proposer warrants that it is willing and able to obtain an errors and omissions insurance policy providing a prudent amount of coverage for the willful or negligent acts, or omissions of any officers, employees or agents thereof.
- C. Proposer warrants that it will not delegate or subcontract its responsibilities under an agreement without the prior written permission of SWRPA.
- D. Proposer warrants that all information provided by it in connection with this proposal is true and accurate.

Signature of Official: _____

Name (typed): _____

Title: _____

Firm: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D

SCHEDULE OF PROFESSIONAL FEES AND EXPENSES

FOR THE AUDIT OF THE 2010 AND 2011 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

	Standard Hourly		Quoted Hourly	
	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Rates</u>	<u>Rates</u>	<u>Total</u>
Partners	_____	_____	_____	_____
Managers	_____	_____	_____	_____
Staff	_____	_____	_____	_____
Subtotal				_____
Total for services Described in Section II E of the RFP				_____
Total all-inclusive maximum price for FY2009-2010 audit (including out-of-pocket expenses)				_____

Note: The rate quoted should not be presented as a general percentage of the standard hourly rate or as a gross deduction from the total all-inclusive maximum price.

Proposals for the subsequent two years (if applicable) should include a method for adjusting the FY2009-2010 audit fee.