

Request for Proposals: Ceres/CookESG Research SEC ESG disclosure web-based search interface

February 5, 2013

Company Information:

Ceres is an advocate for sustainability leadership. Ceres mobilizes a powerful network of investors, companies and public interest groups to accelerate and expand the adoption of sustainable business practices and solutions to build a healthy global economy. Our organizational mission is to mobilize investor and business leadership to build a thriving, sustainable global economy.

CookESG Research is a research consulting practice owned and operated by Jackie Cook and focused on ESG corporate disclosure analysis. CookESG Research includes the 'Fund Votes' investor stewardship analysis project and the 'Climate Risk Disclosure' project. Operating as CookESG Research, Jackie Cook has developed a proprietary set of interrelated technology solutions for extracting data and analyzing information contained in securities-related disclosures.

Background:

For a decade, institutional investor [members](#) of Ceres' [Investor Network on Climate Risk](#) (INCR) have advocated with the SEC for improved disclosure of climate change and other environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks (also known as “sustainability risks”) in corporate filings. Climate change reporting has been a core issue for members since INCR's founding in 2003. In 2007, a coalition of INCR members and Ceres petitioned the Securities and Exchange Commission to issue interpretive guidance clarifying publicly traded firms' obligation to disclose risks related to climate change under existing law. In January 2010, the Commission voted to issue the guidance, which became effective in February 2010. This guidance was first of its kind in the world, followed by similar initiatives in Canada and the UK.

However, SEC implementation of the guidance has been insufficient, and good disclosure is difficult to find. To change this, we need to encourage greater use of SEC climate change disclosure by investors, companies, analysts, managers and regulators.

Similarly, INCR members have asked the SEC to improve disclosure of material ESG risks, in a 2009 letter signed by 41 treasurers, comptrollers, controllers, institutional investors and asset managers representing approximately \$1.4 trillion in assets. However, to date the SEC has taken no significant steps to standardize or improve reporting on key ESG risks.

To improve usage and awareness of climate change and ESG risk disclosure in SEC filings, Ceres, in collaboration with CookESG Research, proposes to release an easy-to-use online interface for searching and analyzing these disclosures.

The interface will be hosted on the Ceres website, and it will be based on the search tool created by CookESG Research, available in an Alpha version at <http://www.climate risk disclosure.org/dev3/>. This tool, created by Jackie Cook of CookESG Research, already provides the features included within the minimum scope of the project, and allows for automatic searches for climate change information and hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) information.

Objective:

Create a customized, user-friendly version of the CookESG Research ESG risk disclosure analysis interface to be housed on the Ceres website.

Project Scope:

Ceres is looking for a vendor who will:

- Develop a user-friendly web interface, in conjunction with Ceres staff and an investor working group; and
- Implement the interface design on the Ceres website to compliment the existing site design and branding, including colors, fonts, page structure, etc.

The exact scope of the project depends upon which features can be incorporated into the tool within the existing budget.

In terms of minimum features, the ESG risk disclosure interface should include the following features:

- A user registration page capturing basic information, including (at minimum):
 - name
 - email address
 - type of user
- A home page with user-friendly search interface for both advanced and beginning users that facilitates search by (at minimum):
 - keyword
 - company
 - industry and sector
 - index
 - type of disclosure
 - year of disclosure
- A help page with guidance on how to use the tool
- A page showing a search results list from which the user can select a company’s climate disclosure abstract to view
- A climate disclosure and fracking disclosure abstract for each company selected by the user, with content broken out by 10-K section or by disclosure type

Furthermore, the interface should:

- Be easily expandable to allow Ceres and CookESG Research to program automatic searches on additional disclosure issues in the future, including water risks and other sustainability issues;
- Provide automatic reports to Ceres and CookESG Research on usage of the tool, including (for each user) information such as pages visited, queries executed and duration of usage; and

In addition, the interface could have the additional advanced features:

- Allow users to create focus groups of companies which they are able to make public or keep private
- Represent ranking metrics at various levels of aggregation.
- Include graphical representations of disclosure by type of disclosure for a particular company, or for comparing multiple companies in a focus group
- Generate web and PDF reports comparing an individual company's disclosure year to year to assess changes/improvements
- Save user searches in user's account so they can revisit them when logging in later
- Customize searches using different keywords (adding keywords or dropping keywords from searches)
- Generate automatic email updates upon release of new filings (for companies that users track)

Budget:

The budget for this project will range from \$5,000 to \$15,000.

Technical Specifications:

The existing climate risk disclosure web-based search interface

(<http://www.climate risk disclosure.org/dev3>) has the following technical specifications:

- The website interface is written in PHP and is powered by a MySQL database.
- The website and database run on a shared server hosted by Powweb.

The structured data processed from raw SEC filings by CookESG's proprietary computational code will be accessible via an API provided by CookESG Research that can be called by Ceres' customized interface.

Proposal Specifications:

Proposals should include:

1. A cost estimate for providing the minimum features specified above.
2. A second cost estimate for providing some or all of the additional features requested above (Please specify which features you can provide).

A proposed timeline and itemized budget must also be included. The combined proposal, timeline and budget shall not be more than 7-10 pages in length. The budget must encompass all design, conversion and implementation, labor, and software or technology acquisitions necessary for the development and maintenance of the search tool. Any aspect of the work that would require the use of subcontractors must be identified and an accompanying budget for that work must also be supplied.

Proposals should include the name and contact information of persons to be contacted for clarification of the proposal if needed. They should also include a summary of your approach to the work, any exceptions to be taken, and any alternative or additional information that you deem important to the representation of your team.

Submission of a response to this request for proposal does not bind Ceres to engage the vendor to provide the requested service. Ceres reserves the right to reject any and all proposals; accept any proposal terms it deems to be in the best interest of the organization; waive any informalities in proposals submitted; and waive any minor irregularities or discrepancies in proposal procedures. Ceres reserves the right to retain a copy of your submittal after selection has been made. The vendor is solely responsible for the costs it incurs in submitting a response to the RFP.

Timeframe:

Our goal is to publicly release the search tool on April 30, 2013.

Assumptions and Agreements:

- All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by the participating vendors.
- Proposals and their accompanying documentation will not be returned.
- Proposals will be considered final as submitted and may not be altered unless requested by the client.
- Proposals should be accompanied by 2-3 references that can speak to similar projects in scale and scope.

Submission Information:

Please submit your proposal to Jim Coburn, Senior Manager, Investor Programs, Ceres, Inc. no later than **12pm EST on Wednesday, February 20, 2013.**

Email address:

coburn@ceres.org

Mailing address:

Ceres, Inc.

Attn: Jim Coburn

99 Chauncy St, 6th Floor

Boston, MA 02111

For Additional Information or Clarification:

Contact Jim Coburn at coburn@ceres.org or 617-247-0700 ext. 119.

Anticipated Selection Schedule:

The schedule for the selection of a vendor is tentatively set as follows:

- Proposals due February 20, 2013
- Conduct RFP reviews by March 8, 2013
- Have a contract signed by March 16, 2013

Pre-proposal informational meetings may be arranged through the primary contact listed above. The intention of these meetings is to allow the opportunity to ask questions with regards to the RFP, assuming the RFP has already been reviewed.

THIS RFP AND THE NATURE OF WORK SOLICITED IS THE CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY INFORMATION OF CERES AND THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN MAY ONLY BE USED AS NECESSARY TO PREPARE A PROPOSAL FOR SUBMISSION TO CERES.