



**Responses to Questions Received on the Request for Proposal (RFP)
Web Based Rebate Processing and Databasing Platform
(RFP No. WUE2025-001)**

July 11, 2025

Project Scope

Question 1: What are the most critical outcomes you expect from this project beyond the explicitly stated requirements for the platform's functionality and management of the existing rebate programs?

A: MWDOC expects the ability to smoothly and efficiently interact with program participants through the platform, providing both administrative and public users with positive experience.

Existing Platform Technical Questions

Question 2: Who is the current vendor?

A: Droplet Technologies

Question 3: Are there any issues or problems with the current system/Is the current vendor performing adequately/can you share information about any major shortcomings of the current platform?

A: We have gone out to RFP due to arriving at the limit per our administration code of the length we can hold a contract with any one vendor (5 years). Our level of satisfaction with the current vendor is not necessarily relevant to your response to the RFP. All requested features are detailed in the RFP. Specific issues can be discussed in detail with the selected vendor.

Question 4: Will we have full access to the current system specifications and requirements? Will we have full access to the current system's login as water customers and staff users?

A: This is to be determined; we will share as much as we can.

Question 5: Can you give us a demo of internal solution used at the moment?

A: Currently, we can only allow you to submit a test application and go through the process as a customer.

Question 6: Could you please share the tools and platforms you are currently using or planning to continue using as part of your internal processes?

A: We are only using our current vendor, Droplet, and DocuSign to obtain participant signatures. However, the Platform must have open API access (for easy connection to Microsoft Power BI and similar software), and data exports must be compatible with ESRI GIS Software.

Data Migration & Storage

Question 7: Are there specific data migration strategies or tools that you prefer for populating the new platform with data from MWDOC's current application?

A: There is not currently a specific migration strategy preference.

Question 8: Are you open to our recommendations on the best way to technically and operationally migrate in-progress applications from the current platform to the new platform during launch? Are there any firm requirements you have around this migration?

A: If applicable, we are open to exploring recommendations.

Question 9: Please provide MWDOC access to the current platform's data schema or APIs during the proposal writing process. If that is not practical, please provide the number of database tables.

A: MWDOC has access to one csv file of all TRP applications and one csv file of all S2D applications. MWDOC will provide as much additional information regarding the current platform as possible.

Question 10: Will you provide a data export or will reverse engineering be needed?

A: Data export can be provided.

Question 11: What is the volume and format of existing data? (SQL database records, images, other files etc.)? Can you tell us the database type (e.g., MySQL, SQL Server) and the typical file formats for documents like photos or receipts?

A: CSV files, PNGs, JPEGs, and PDFs. Please prepare for compressing large file sizes for images. MWDOC will provide as much additional information regarding the current platform as possible.

Question 12: In case if the files should be migrated - where are those files are hosted now?

A: MWDOC will provide as much information as possible regarding the current platform; details are not currently available.

Question 13: Should the migration include all historical data and file attachments, or just a defined range (e.g., last 3–5 years)?

A: It is necessary that all historical Excel-based data can be imported into the new Platform. It is preferred that all historical data and file attachments can be imported into the new Platform.

Question 14: What is the total current storage footprint of the existing platform? What is the average size (in MB/GB) of a complete application record, including all attachments?

A: MWDOC will provide as much information as possible regarding the current platform; details are not currently available.

Question 15: Can you provide expected concurrent user loads? What is the expected number of active users using the system simultaneously during peak periods?

A: MWDOC will provide as much additional information regarding the current platform as possible; not all information is available to provide on this forum. An estimate is a peak of 6 MWDOC staff, 15 or more retail agency or inspector staffs, 100 or more public participant staff.

Question 16: For in-progress applications, which have not been finalized at the time the new platform is deployed, will they still be handled by the existing one? Or do you expect/consider a full data migration process where all applications are copied over to the new platform and owners are prompted to use it instead of the old platform?

A: If applicable, we expect in progress applications will be completed in the existing platform.

Question 17: Where are the current attachment / image documents currently stored? Do you have an estimate of the total size of these documents? Do you have any estimates of the growth of data volume for these data sources?

A: MWDOC will provide as much additional information regarding the current platform as possible; at this time we do not have an estimate but will provide that information in the future. Data volume will continue to grow as applications are received over time.

Question 18: What is the preferred nature of integration (i.e., database, API, SFTP, file extracts, etc.) for the import of existing Program data?

A: A preference is not defined at this time.

Question 19: Are there any additional third-party software, APIs, or databases that the platform will need to integrate with beyond DocuSign and ESRI GIS Software (such as rebate check mailing system or the accounting system)? If so, do those systems support APIs or other modern integration mechanisms (e.g., SFTP, webhooks)?

A: WUE Database (currently Fortech) – file export/import; Accounting ERP – file export/import.

Question 20: What is the expected structure and format of the data from the current database that needs to be migrated to the new platform?

A: Excel data, image files, and PDFs.

Question 21: Are there any specific data quality issues in the existing data that need to be addressed during migration or within the new platform?

A: Data quality issues will likely be discovered but should be minimal as data cleanup has been performed overtime as MWDOC staff have discovered outstanding errors and inconsistencies. There may be data points/columns not currently captured in the existing data that would need to be added to the new Platform's downloadable dataset (if applicable).

Question 22: Can you share details about the current technology stack used for the existing rebate platform, and do you have any preferences or requirements for the technology stack (frontend, backend, database) to be used in the new system?

A: MWDOC will provide as much additional information regarding the current platform as possible. There is no preference or requirement to note at this time.

Question 23: Are there preferred vendors or technologies for data replication and integration that you are currently using?

A: No.

Hosting & Cloud Compliance

Question 24: Does MWDOC have a preference for hosting (cloud vs. on-premises)?

A: Cloud is preferred but MWDOC is open to exploring pricing of both options.

Question 25: If cloud hosting is preferred, is there a preferred cloud provider (e.g., AWS, Azure, Google Cloud)?

A: Azure is preferred but open to other options.

Question 26: Are there any hosting service requirements, or can we make our best recommendation based on the project requirements?

A: You can recommend based on project requirements. If multiple services are viable, pricing differences should be noted.

Question 27: Any limitations for architectural solutions? Can we use, for example, cloud-based solutions such as SharePoint?

A: No limitations, but MWDOC currently utilizes SharePoint internally.

Question 28: Are there specific load time or speed performance benchmarks the site should achieve?

A: No

Question 29: Do you have existing documentation about your database and/or systems related to the current rebate processing platform?

A: MWDOC will make full efforts to provide necessary documentation.

Question 30: Software as a service was referenced multiple times in the RFP. Are you open to a professional services organization to develop a custom database/application for the rebate processing and databasing platform within a MWDOC-owned cloud environment?

A: Yes.

Question 31: Are there specific programming languages, frameworks, or operating systems that MWDOC staff are familiar with or prefer for potential future internal modifications or maintenance?

A: MWDOC utilizes Sharepoint and other applications in the Microsoft Universe; however, there are no defined preferences or other specifics.

Budget-Related Questions

Question 32: Is there a defined budget range or ceiling for this project, including both development and the 5-year maintenance period? Is there an existing budget in place for the total cost of ownership of selected tools and platforms beyond the budget allocated to this RFP? If so, are there any additional details you can share about budget constraints on the selected tools/platforms?

A: There is no defined budget range at this time. MWDOC is exploring costs through this process.

Question 33: To accurately scope and price the Year 2–5 subscription fee, can MWDOC clarify the expected volume and nature of "ongoing Platform improvements or Expansions"? For example, should we assume a fixed number of enhancement hours per year, or will these be scoped and priced separately as change orders? Additionally, are there any known or anticipated new programs or features that should be factored into the base subscription pricing?

A: At this time, there are no known or anticipated new programs or features to be factored into the base subscription pricing; however, MWDOC would like the ability to integrate enhancements as needs may change. We anticipate that a large enhancement would be scoped and priced separately as change orders, but request that minor upgrades/enhancements fall under the subscription fee.

Question 34: Is the budget flexible if additional capabilities are determined to be worthwhile, especially given the potential for platform expansion?

A: Yes, but budget increases may require board approval. Platform expansions that require additional funding would be thoroughly planned out with MWDOC staff and occur with timeframes that accommodate to MWDOC board and budgeting approvals.

Question 35: Are there any specific reporting requirements for how the consultant tracks and reports on expenditures against the budgeted amount?

A: MWDOC will have basic invoicing and expenditure tracking requirements, but there is flexibility that can be discussed with the vendor.

Question 36: The cost for ongoing work in Year 2-5 will largely depend on the platform improvements or expansions that you decide to prioritize. Some of this you will learn as users interact with the new systems or based on changes to the overall rebate program or environmental conditions (e.g. larger drought periods). Would an estimated (but not contracted) fee structure for Years 2-5, along with a process for defining each year's budget, be acceptable for submission?

a. Yes.

RFP Process Related Questions

Question 37: Do you have a breakdown of point/score for each factor to compare proposals and firms by your review panel?

A: Proposals will be scored based on Approach (Platform Development & Project Management), Schedule, Budget, Team Experience, and Qualifications. These are typically on a 0-10 point scale.

Question 38: Will there be an opportunity for a follow-up round of clarifications or a pre-proposal meeting?

A: There will be no pre-proposal meeting, but respondents will have the opportunity to discuss clarifications during interviews.

Question 39: How will you define and measure the success of the solution? (e.g., reduction in manual processes, faster application processing, improved transparency, etc.)

A: This is not defined at this time.

Question 40: Does MWDOC have a desired date for go-live of this project?

A: There is no fixed schedule but the goal is January 1, 2026. Respondents to this RFP should detail this timeline in their response and should identify their own timeline with details.

Question 41: Our resourcing model is to assign the best matches for the project based on skill set and availability. Project needs shift over time, and our employee makeup changes over time. Would information about our team (capabilities, specific qualifications, bios of real employees, etc.) be acceptable for submission?

A: Yes.

Question 42: Would a cover or table of contents count toward the page limit?

A: No.

Question 43: Are we able to use font sizes smaller than 11pt for headers, footers, charts, graphics, and other elements apart from the main body text of the proposal as long as the text is legible?

A: Yes.

Question 44: The RFP says, "For purposes of Consultant's budgeting submittal, assume a maximum of 4 pre and post launch meetings of, at most, 2-hours in duration." We assume there will need to be more meetings than this during the pre-launch phase. Can you please clarify what type of meeting you are referring to in this note? We generally follow an agile process. We have standup meetings frequently as well as client demos to show our progress.

A: In this case, please provide costs for the 4 meetings referenced in the document and costs then for the anticipated additional meetings. These meetings are broadly referencing kickoff, planning, preparation, and other necessary meetings needed in order to launch the platform.

Platform Requirements

Question 45: Are there any Service-Level Agreements (SLAs) with regard to system performance (i.e. page load time)?

A: The Platform should be easily accessible by users on a computer, tablet, or cell phone. There are no defined SLAs for page load time.

Question 46: The RFP calls out 5 Portals. Would it be acceptable if the vendor provides 1 application with 5 URLs and have the Application look and perform differently based on the URL selected? (Page 9)

A: Yes. The portals differ for customers, MWDOC staff, inspection vendors, and retail agency staff. The application should perform differently based on residential, commercial, and public agency customers.

Question 47: What would the data source for the Address Validation requirement be (i.e., MWDOC GIS environment, or other)?

A: Other, open to vendor-proposed solutions.

Question 48: Does the agency require a cell phone/tablet application (ex. iOS and or Android) or is a reactive web page acceptable? Are there specific devices (e.g., iPhones, Samsung tablets) or browsers we should focus on for testing?

A: A reactive web page is preferred, using Edge, Chrome, or Safari.

Question 49: Are there any parts of the MWDOC infrastructure that the vendor is required to interface with (i.e., GIS, Payment portal, etc.)?

A: No, but the Platform must have open API access, and data exports must be compatible with ESRI GIS Software.

Question 50: Do you have any requirements regarding platform infrastructure? In particular, are there any limitations in the use of cloud-based infrastructure, including databases?

A: No.

Question 51: Are you open to a hybrid delivery model with a mix of offshore and onshore resources? Is the use of near-shore or offshore staff permitted for development or support roles?

A: The Platform and data must be hosted onshore, however we are open to working with offshore teams.

Question 52: Database Structure specifies that the Platform must have open API access. Will this API access be limited to supporting the exporting of data in ESRI GIS compatible format or are there other requirements?

A: The Platform must have open API access that is compatible with Microsoft Power BI, Azure SQL Database, and similar programs. The Platform must also be capable of producing data exports that are compatible with ESRI GIS software.

Question 53: Report Generation specifies final formatting customization. We take this to mean creation of complex reports that combine various tabular or graphical elements where the specific elements are predefined, but the user may customize how they are combined in the exported report output (e.g. a chart of Program Activity followed by Rebate Fund Tracking data in tabular format). Is that correct and if not, could you please elaborate?

A: Yes, that is correct.

Question 54: Do you have any specific requirements or preferences for the user interface?

A: The user interface must be customizable to have MWDOC's branding and color themes. The interface must be user-friendly for users of all ages and users on computer, tablet, or cell-phone devices.

Question 55: Based on the nature of this product, can we assume that ease of use and intuitive interaction are a higher priority than artistic or highly customized design? Or do you envision a different approach?

A: Yes, but the visual design must be capable of accommodating MWDOC's branding.

Question 56: Is there a need to integrate with any external solution for any purpose? Examples - reporting regarding funding, vendors, etc?

A: DocuSign or other eSignature application for signatures on the terms & conditions for the application and the LTP.

Question 57: The RFP mentions that the LTP form is auto-generated by an external system. Should this form be integrated with the proposed solution, or should we build a new mechanism to generate it? Are there any other auto-generated forms that need similar handling?

A: The LTP is currently generated in DocuSign for eSignature. This should be integrated, or another mechanism that can collect eSignatures should be included.

Question 58: Is MWDOC seeking a fully custom-built solution, a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution, or a hybrid approach?

A: All are viable options.

Question 59: Does the Platform need to track how much funding from each source has been allocated and/or spent? Does the Platform need to report this spending to the funding sources? If so, how many systems and how frequently?

A: No, funding sources are tracked externally by MWDOC. Exports summarizing various funding totals would be preferred.

Question 60: Is there any internal or external communication expected between staff and customers (e.g., messaging, notifications)? Should SMS functionality be included?

A: Currently, Staff communicate with customers via email or phone; however, we are open to considering other methods.

Question 61: Is the current website built on a CMS platform? If so, which one? If not, do you have a preferred CMS moving forward?

A: The current website is not built on a CMS platform. There is no preferred CMS at this time.

Question 62: Assuming UI/UX design and implementation will be done by the vendor only? Please confirm.

A: Yes. The visual design must be capable of accommodating MWDOC's branding.

Question 63: Should email templates be editable by MWDOC staff or fixed by admin?

A: They should be editable by MWDOC staff.

Question 64: Is multilingual support or WCAG 2.1 AA compliance a requirement?

A: Respondents are to have the ability to provide these services.

Admin and User Accounts

Question 65: You've listed 8 MWDOC staff, 4 accounting staff, 54 retail agency accounts, and 5 inspection vendor accounts. How many Admin accounts should we plan for (e.g., 1-2 senior admins)? Also, should we design for user growth over 5 years, like adding more staff or agencies?

A: 3-4 senior admin. Yes, there may be more accounts added, as well as accounts deactivated, as staff members join and leave.

Question 66: For Retail Agency/Inspection teams, will there be a shared login account, or should each authorized individual have their own user account?

A: Each individual should have their own user account.

Question 67: Can you clarify the specific permissions for each user role, especially Admins? For example, do Admins have full access to all data and settings, while inspectors only upload data for assigned applications? Should retail agencies see funding details, or is that restricted to MWDOC staff?

- MWDOC Admin: full access, can send LTPs, pre-approve and approve projects
- MWDOC staff: ability to edit certain fields and move applications to different stages. Cannot send LTPs.
- MWDOC accounting: Access to approved applications. Can "batch" applications (final approval on funding)
- Retail agencies: Have access to only the applications in their service area, can upload documents, photos, complete inspections, and leave comments. Can see funding details. Cannot send LTPs.
- Inspectors: Can only see applications that are assigned to them for inspection (inspection assigned and inspection completed), and upload inspection data, documents, photos, and leave comments.

Question 68: Do different staff user types (e.g., Program Managers vs. Accounting vs. Agency Inspectors) require field-level permissions or action-based access restrictions?

A: Yes.

Funding Rules

Question 69: What is the content of a funding rule? Could you provide an example?

A: A funding rule contains a name for the rule, the funding rate, and a GL coding string for MWDOC's accounting department (GL coding rules will be provided by MWDOC)

- Example 1: Turf North OC – Grant A – \$1/sqft –12-123-45-1-123

- Example 2: Turf South OC – Grant B – \$1/sqft – 12-999-45-1-456

Question 70: The platform will apply funding rules based on site type, location, and retail agency. Roughly how many rules exist, and how complex are they?

A: Most funding rules are based on square footage. The Tree Rebate is \$100 per tree. The Landscape Design Rebate is \$1000 or the cost of the design, if less (verified by MWDOC staff based on customer-provided design invoice). All applied funding rules to an application are calculated and total to the final rebate amount. Currently there 40 active funding rules.

Our current funding rule structure for Turf Replacement is as follows:

- Funding Source 1: MWD base rate
- Funding Source 2: MWDOC Grant rate
- Funding Source 3: Retail Agency Supplemental rate
- Funding Source 4: MWD Grant rate
- Funding Source 5: Tree Rebate
- Funding Source 6: Retail Agency Supplemental Tree Rebate
- Funding Source 7: Landscape Design Rebate
- Funding Source 8: Retail Agency Supplemental LDR

For Spray to Drip:

- Funding Source 1: MWD base rate
- Funding Source 2: MWDOC Grant rate
- Funding Source 3: Retail Agency Supplemental rate

Question 71: Are funding rules assigned manually or automatically?

A: Both. Funding rules should be automatically generated by the Platform to match the rebate application's details, but the Platform must give administrators the ability to change or turn off the funding rule.

Question 72: Funding rules appear complex (by site type, agency, geography, program type). Can you confirm if rules will be provided in a structured format (e.g., spreadsheet) or if rule-building tools should be part of the platform?

A: MWDOC can provide rules in a structured format to help simplify the process.

Question 73: Should staff be able to override funding amounts manually, and should the system log these changes?

A: Yes, staff should be able to override funding amounts manually and the system should log changes. Funding amounts may need to be lowered from the calculated amount based on the eligible project costs verified by receipts.

Question 74: Are funding changes only allowed at LTP and final approval stages, or could they occur at any time during the process?

A: Funding changes can occur at any applicable time during the process.

Question 75: Would you like a self-service UI that allows MWDOC staff to independently add, edit, or disable funding rules without developer involvement?

A: Yes.

Question 76: Is there a centralized master database of funding sources within MWDOC? If so, should this include eligibility logic, caps, and active/inactive status toggles?

A: Yes. Yes.

Question 77: Should the system auto-recommend funding rules based on inputs like location, site type, and program, or is manual selection preferred?

A: Auto-recommend is preferred (for example, funding rules for residential accounts should not appear when assigning funding rules to a commercial application).

Question 78: Will funding be managed manually via admin interface or should a rule engine UI be included?

A: MWDOC staff creates funding rules and assigns funding rules to application.

Question 79: Are there pain points with how funding rules are managed today that you would want to improve in the new platform?

A: The ability to change one funding source without resetting the entire list of funding sources.

Inspections (Pre & Post)

Question 80: Will inspections always be conducted by the same set of vendors, or should the platform allow MWDOC to assign or reassign vendors dynamically?

A: The Platform needs to allow MWDOC to assign or reassign vendors as needed. For example, we have a water agency that pays for our vendor to perform inspections, but wants the ability to perform the inspections in-house should the vendor become backlogged.

Question 81: Should inspection vendors be restricted from editing inspection data once submitted?

A: Yes. This is because MWDOC staff reviews the inspection once it is completed. The inspector must notify MWDOC staff of any changes that need to be made.

Question 82: Will inspectors need the ability to enter data offline (e.g., in areas with limited or no internet connectivity), with automatic syncing once reconnected.

A: Not required but it would be helpful.

Question 83: Is there a preferred structure (e.g., PDF, email template) for inspection work orders?

A: Email notification of the inspection assignment and a generated PDF form. Ideally, data entry for the inspections should be integrated into the portal so that data can be entered in the field or without needing to upload the PDF form.

Question 84: Should inspectors have an option to accept/reject or reschedule inspections through the portal?

A: No option to accept/reject inspections. Scheduling is not built into the Platform, but that could be an option for inspectors to track appointments.

Question 85: How are inspectors chosen for work orders? Do they ever need to be modified to a different inspector?

A: Each agency selects how inspections will be performed – in-house at the agency, using the MWDOC inspection vendor, or using their own third-party inspector, so it depends on what each agency has selected. Yes, there could be a need to modify it to a different inspector.

Question 86: Can you tell us more about the work order and what information it contains? Can you provide a list or example of the data fields that inspectors are expected to complete during pre- and post-installation inspections (e.g., checklists, dropdowns, notes, measurements, specific photo dimensions)?

A: The work order notifies the inspector to conduct a pre- or post-inspection and provides the customer's site address and requested square footage. Inspectors are able to view the customer's site plan and uploaded photos. During inspection, the inspectors record measurements and verify various project aspects. Templates of the pre- and post-inspection forms can be found at the bottom of this page

<https://mwdoc.dropletportal.com/rebate/program/resources>.

Question 87: Are pre- and post-inspection reports currently templated, or are they free-form? Should these reports be auto generated using uploaded data, photos, and measurements?

A: They are currently templated. Yes.

Question 88: Will the platform need GPS tagging or geofencing capabilities during on-site inspections?

A: We would like this as an option, but not necessarily required.

Question 89: Will applicants have view access to inspection reports, or should that information be visible to internal staff only?

A: Applicants should have view access to inspection reports.

Question 90: Do current inspectors use any tools (e.g., mobile apps, photo timestamping) that need to be integrated?

A: Inspectors currently use Moasure, <https://www.moasure.com/>, and export measurement files in PDF form.

Report Customization Needs

Question 91: Can you share a sample report or list of must-have data fields (e.g., rebate amount, water saved)?

A: We will attach a list of current data fields.

Question 92: Do you prefer formats like Excel, PDF, or dashboards, and how often are reports run (e.g., monthly, quarterly)? Would you consider alternate tools for reporting?

A: Excel and csv formats are typically preferred, we are open to alternative tools. Data exports currently are ran daily or almost daily.

Question 93: Can you provide more information about the report spreadsheets you're using today? How are they generated, what are their use cases, and how often do you need to change their format? Are there any reporting needs that are not met by your existing report spreadsheets?

A: We have attached the fields of the Turf Data export along with the reporting report. We would like to expand exporting ability; however, specifics are not defined at this time.

Question 94: Are you envisioning a custom report builder capability within the platform, potentially by embedding tools like Power BI or similar? If so, should reports support role-based access controls to ensure certain reports are only visible to specific user groups?

A: The Platform must have open API access that is compatible with Microsoft Power BI, Azure SQL Database, and similar programs. The platform itself does not necessarily need to produce custom reports as MWDOC will be connecting the platform for internal PowerBI and similar applications.

Question 95: In addition to ad-hoc/custom reports, do you have a set of predefined reports you'd like built into the platform? If yes, could you share the specific KPIs, charts, or visuals you expect to see in those reports?

A: No preference defined at this time.

Question 96: Do you have an understanding of the full scope of reporting needed? How many types of reports are required? Should these be available only for download, or is a visual dashboard also required?

A: The full scope with change over time. The Platform must offer master excel dataset downloads, monthly payment reports for accounting, and monthly inspections report summaries by retail agency, and more as needed. A visual dashboard is not required.

External Integrations

Question 97: Are there any third-party systems that the platform must integrate with (e.g., financial, CRM, document storage, payment processing)?

A: Data exports are transferred to Accounting ERP & the WUE database (Fortech currently).

Question 98: Are there any external systems (e.g., funding partners, accounting systems, or GIS dashboards) that need real-time or batch data access via APIs?

A: The Platform must have open API access that is compatible with Microsoft Power BI, Azure SQL Database, and similar programs. The Platform must also be capable of producing data exports that are compatible with ESRI GIS software.

Question 99: Since you use DocuSign for e-signatures, should the platform connect directly to MWDOC's existing DocuSign account through an API, or are you open to us providing a separate DocuSign solution?

A: Open to providing a separate DocuSign solution.

Question 100: Which ESRI tools do you use (e.g., ArcGIS Online, ArcGIS Pro), and what specific data should be exported (e.g., project locations, square footage)? Do you prefer a particular export format, like shapefiles or GeoJSON?

A: ArcGIS Online, ArcGIS Pro; Specific data to be exported includes but is not limited to Export format compatible with ESRI software.

Question 101: Does MWDOC plan to export rebate disbursement data to an external accounting platform? If yes, which one?

A: For now, we don't have a clear path yet. Currently, we download a csv file of closed applications and send it to our ERP system in-house as a control.

Security, Compliance & Data Governance

Question 102: Are there any other compliance frameworks or requirements to which this solution will be subjected beyond the California Public Records Act (Government Code Section 6250 et seq.) and MWDOC's retention policy of maintaining documents for a minimum of seven (7) years? Assumed California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) is needed. Anything else? (for example, compliance for financial

reporting) Are there plans to support accessibility standards and multi-language capabilities in the platform?

A: Respondents must have the ability to meet all compliance requirements related to the California Consumer Privacy Act, ADA, and multi-lingual support. Additionally, Respondents should review the sample agreement attached to the RFP to ensure they can meet all other requirements related to insurance, indemnity, reporting of gifts, etc.

Question 103: Are there specific data handling or access control policies that need to be incorporated into the data pipelines and workflows beyond the segregation of duties and the ability to turn on and off features for different parties?

A: No.

Question 104: Are there specific cybersecurity protocols, threat management tools, or standards that the vendor must follow beyond the requirement for secure document upload with encryption and access controls?

A: No specific requirements, but the platform must have sound cybersecurity using modern technology solutions.

Question 105: Are there specific data residency requirements for hosting the platform and its data?

A: On-shore only.

Question 106: What are the disaster recovery and business continuity requirements for the requested solution, beyond the need for data integrity and security through appropriate backup and encryption protocols?

A: MWDOC would prefer the system be restored within 7 business days, but open to exploring pricing for different timelines.

Question 107: What security measures are currently in place? Are there any specific compliance requirements for the new portal such as SOC 2, HIPAA, that need to be met?

A: Security measures will not be posted on this Q&A document and may be discussed at a later date.

Question 108: For sensitive documents like IRS W-9 forms, are there specific security standards you require, like SOC 2 or AES-256 encryption? For 7-year audit retention, are there particular formats or audit trail features (e.g., user action logs) we should include to simplify compliance?

A: TLS 1.2 or 1.3 during the upload/download process; AES-256 encryption for the storage of the file itself

Question 109: Could you comment on needed security level, applied protocols, procedures, compliance? Comment from request for reference - "Utilization of a database structured efficiently for speed, size, ease of accessibility, quality control, and all security protocols to track the entire process of the application from customer submittal through rebate payment".

A: Modern authentication and authorization procedures, user ID, tracking critical actions, and assigned roles.

Question 110: Are there any defined procedures related to access control, encryption (in transit and at rest), data retention, audit logging, or incident response?

A: Reasonable controls are needed to observe system activity. Data retention of rebate information is needed for possibly 10 or more years.

Question 111: What is the required frequency for data backups (e.g., real-time, daily, weekly or monthly)?

A: Daily is preferred, but open to exploring pricing of other options.

Question 112: Does MWDOC currently use a Single Sign-On (SSO) system for internal staff, Retail Agency Staff, and Inspection Vendors? If so, what type (e.g., SAML, OAuth, Active Directory)?

A: The current rebate processing platform does not use a SSO system.

Question 113: Will identity and access management (IAM) systems need to be integrated for Role -Based Access Control (RBAC) in the new system?

A: No.

Question 114: Will two-factor authentication be required for users utilizing username and password authentication?

A: No.

Audit Requirements

Question 115: What level of detail is expected in audit trails (e.g., user actions, timestamps, IP tracking)?

A: User actions, labeling who uploaded documents & photos, date stamps.

Question 116: The RFP does not mention any payment-related processes. After an application is approved, is there an audit trail maintained for the payment status?

A: Rebate checks are processed on a monthly basis. After checks are cut, currently MWDOC uploads a csv file containing check number, check date, and check amount which then updates the paid applications for that month and closes out the applications. There is some flexibility in the workflow related to integrating accounting information into the platform.

Question 117: Are there specific compliance or audit checklists to be baked into the workflow (e.g., for federal grant tracking)?

A: We do not have any specific checklists at this time.

Future Expansion Ideas

Question 118: Are there any specific deliverables expected during the "Platform refinements" and "Platform expansion" phases beyond general improvements and new programs?

A: Not at this time.

Question 119: Can you share examples of potential additions, like a new rebate program or enhanced reporting? Should we prioritize specific scalability features, like a modular design or cloud-based storage, to handle growth? For future program additions, will the new programs follow the same structure as existing programs, or are there expected changes in the workflow or process steps?

A: New programs may be added but that is undetermined at this time; however, typically programs run similarly. As we collect more data, storage will need to be considered.

Application Workflow and Stage Customization

Question 120: Do you have example of application in PDF format for printing?

A: We do not, feature does not currently exist.

Question 121: What is a "Partial" application?

A: An application where the user started the process but then stopped before submitting all required fields

Question 122: Is there currently a process for submitting multiple applications and can a single customer apply to multiple rebate programs?

A: Yes. A single customer can apply to both TR and S2D at the same time. A customer can also have multiple applications at the same time, for example commercial accounts with multiple water meters can have projects on-going at each site.

Question 123: In case the documents uploaded do not follow the guidelines mentioned on the website, are customers notified to upload the said documents again or is the application directly rejected? If rejected, do the customers have an option to reopen the application and upload new documents in accordance with guidelines, or do they have to start the application process again?

A: Customers are notified to provide corrected documents. They would not need to start the application process again.

Question 124: The RFP outlines a 14-step workflow. Are these steps fixed, or should the platform support custom workflow configurations in the future? Are there any specific conditional flows we should account for? (E.g., skipping steps based on eligibility or program type)

A: These steps are fixed.

Question 125: What happens when an application is denied by staff? Please provide more insights into the process and communication involved.

A: Customers are notified of the reason their application is denied, typically via email. It would be preferred to have a feature built into the platform where the reason for denial can be entered and generate an automated email sent by the system.

Question 126: Can applications be returned to earlier stages in the workflow, or must they follow a strictly linear progression?

A: Except for the initial application submission by the customer, applications can be returned to earlier stages in the workflow by MWDOC. For example, if an inspection needs to be redone it can be reset from “Pre-inspection complete” to “Pre-inspection assigned.”

Question 127: Can rejected applications be reopened, or must a new application be submitted?

A: A new application must be submitted.

Question 128: Do applications fail inspections? Can the submitter address problems found during pre- and post-inspection? How often does this happen?

A: Yes. Typically, eligibility is screened prior to assigning to pre or post-inspection. However, when deficiencies in the project occur, customers are contacted with options to make revisions, if applicable. This happens occasionally.

Question 129: How many of the applications are filed on paper? Are the forms for these applications designed to be scannable?

A: Applications are rarely filed on paper. Currently, MWDOC staff create an application in the Platform for the customer based on the information provided on paper.

Question 130: Should each workflow step trigger a system-generated email? If so, should these emails be customizable by MWDOC staff?

A: An email should be generated when an application is submitted, when the LTP is sent, when inspections are assigned, when project deadlines are approaching, and when a project is approved. Yes, these emails should be customizable.

Question 131: Could you clarify how applicants are categorized under the Landscape Design Rebate or Tree Rebate programs within the Turf Replacement application flow? Since the RFP does not reference separate application paths, is this bifurcation determined by specific inputs during the TRP application, or handled manually during staff review?

A: The Landscape Design Rebate and Tree Rebate are currently not separate applications, and eligibility is manually screened by MWDOC staff during review. Ideally, the new Platform will be able to include new questions in the application that allows customers

to mark their intention to participate in the additional rebates, and submit required documentation during project review in a separate section for those rebates.

Question 132: Are there any specific validations or checks needed on uploaded receipts? Do we need to do character recognition of receipts for processing purposes?

A: Allowed formats: PDF and image files. Character recognition is not required. Receipts are manually reviewed and verified by MWDOC staff. Duplicate detection would be a useful feature.

Project Management & Collaboration

Question 133: Is it acceptable for all work to be performed remotely? What level of in-person interaction is expected versus what can be conducted remotely, particularly for project meetings, training workshops, and ongoing communications?

A: Yes, everything can be conducted remotely if needed.

Question 134: What level of post-implementation support is expected from the consultant, and for how long, beyond the initial startup transition period and the yearly maintenance and enhancement window?

A: Post-implementation support is expected on an as-needed basis until the end of the contract. MWDOC must be able to have quick and clear communication by email with the consultant to address any issues. Consultant support may be needed for urgent issues such as fixing errors involving rebate funding within 1 day for our accounting to properly log payments and cut rebate checks, or MWDOC must have the ability to adjust all critical datapoints if the database lives within MWDOC-owned cloud environment.

Question 135: What level of post-launch support is expected (e.g., 24/7 support, business hours only)? What are the expected support hours and days for system maintenance and assistance? Are there any formal requirements for the working hours and availability in your local time zone?

A: There is no formal requirement; however, MWDOC would prefer to be able to directly contact support during MWDOC business hours and/or receiving responses within a timely manner. There is no issue with less urgent matters or system updates occurring outside of business hours if MWDOC staff are not needed to complete any action.

Question 136: Do you have any requirement on user training? Are you fine with online training for the staff?

A: Online training is acceptable.

Question 137: How many staff members will require training?

A: 9 MWDOC staff. Approximately 30 retail agency staff and inspection vendors.

Question 138: In section 2 it is mentioned in a document that your side will provide "overall project management and coordination". Could you highlight who the decision-making representative from your side would be and what the involvement of this person(s) would look like? Also, please describe what is included into the meaning of the project management here, and what kind of responsibilities would you like to keep on your side?

A: MWDOC decision makers include the Turf Program Manager, Water Use Efficiency Department Supervisor, and other MWDOC Analysts. MWDOC will work with the vendor to confirm the new Platform requirements and requested features. MWDOC would like the ability to edit content displayed on the Platform, add funding rules, and update automated notifications.

Question 139: Do you have any tech stack preferences? For example, you have an inhouse team that will be supporting the solution later?

A: No. Vendor is expected to provide all Platform-related technical support.

Question 140: Are there any anticipated challenges with stakeholder availability that might impact the project schedule?

A: No anticipated challenges.

Question 141: How will stakeholder engagement be facilitated for the project meetings and training workshops?

A: MWDOC will host training workshop meetings for retail agency staff and inspectors to learn how to use and navigate the Platform.

Question 142: What level of internal resources and technical expertise do you have available to support this project on an ongoing basis, particularly for platform troubleshooting and refinements after launch?

A: Vendor is responsible for developing, launching, troubleshooting, maintaining the Platform. MWDOC staff have limited technical expertise.

Question 143: What is the preferred method for providing ongoing user support after the platform is launched?

A: Email, Zoom or Teams meeting, phone calls.

Question 144: What are MWDOC's preferred methods of asynchronous communication (i.e. email, Teams chat, Slack)?

A: Email.

Question 145: Do you have a preference for the collaboration model? Would you prefer Fixed Price or Time & Material?

A: We are open to either; however, fixed price helps us with budget planning.

Question 146: What communication and collaboration tools do you use for project management and coordination? Will the consulting firm be expected to use these tools?

A: None; No/open to using other tools.

Question 147: Are there any known risks or potential obstacles that could impact the timeline or success of the project that haven't been explicitly stated in the RFP's background section?

A: No.

Question 148: Is there a preferred project management methodology (e.g., Agile, Waterfall) for this engagement?

A: No.

Question 149: What are the expectations for reporting on project progress, risks, and issues during platform development and post-launch?

A: Clear communication and defined timelines that are updated as progress is made and issues are discovered.

Miscellaneous

Question 150: Do you have existing licenses that you want to leave as is? Anything you are using and are planning to continue using?

A: No.

Question 151: Do you need KYC?

A: No.

Question 152: Do you already have a product backlog or high-level roadmap for the second release (i.e., post-launch platform expansion)?

A: No.

Question 153: Could you explain this feature in detail:

"For the retail agencies, MWDOC can waitlist or turn on and off which programs their residents can apply for, update the point of contact, and note who performs their site inspections"

Does that mean that we will need to divide Users into geographical regions and make features available by region?

A: No – the users select their retail agency water provider when creating an account/application. MWDOC must be able to waitlist or turn on and off which programs each agency's customers can apply for, update the point of contact, and note who performs their site inspections based on the user's selection.

Question 154: What is meant by "Track participation" - user activity logs?

A: Tracking the number of submitted apps over time, number of applications in active stages, number of cancelled/denied apps, etc.

Question 155: "Access all captured data through organized data tables." - here we are assuming access to submitted applications, User information, User activity log. Correct? Anything missed if considering on high-level?

A: Yes, that is correct.

Question 156: What are "purchase requisition queries"?

A: MWDOC creates purchase requisitions to track funding sources. The current platform creates accounting General Ledger (GL) coding lines we use to create the purchase reqs. The req is used to pay individual applications with rebate checks sent to their designated address. The purchase req coding in the data is used for reporting.

Question 157: Could you explain what the following means? "The system will need to accommodate all file format attachments throughout all steps"

A: Documents must be able to be imported into the Platform in the formats of PDF, JPG, PNG, DOCX, and XLSX. These imports are needed for uploading pictures, inspection forms, invoices, and more to the Platform.

Question 158: What does the approval process look like from an operational/legal perspective to add new features and programs to this rebate program?

A: MWDOC staff can suggest, discuss, and carry out the addition of new features or programs.

Question 159: Would you be open to implementing OCR-based automation to extract and verify data from customer-submitted water bills and other eligibility documents, in order to reduce manual verification effort?

A: Yes, but not required.

Question 160: Can you please confirm whether the platform is expected to handle any financial disbursement functions such as initiating rebate check issuance, managing or recording electronic payments, or integrating with MWDOC's accounting or ERP systems for fund transfers?

A: No, there is not an expectation for the platform to handle financial disbursements.