

SANTA YNEZ BASIN EASTERN MANAGEMENT AREA
GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) FOR CONSULTING SERVICES
FOR RATE CONSULTANT

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

July 26, 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Santa Ynez Basin Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (EMA GSA) was originally formed via a Memorandum of Agreement under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The EMA GSA is in the process of transitioning to governance through a Joint Powers Agreement (expected July 16, 2024) to more effectively implement its Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). As a result, the EMA GSA is seeking Statements of Qualification (SOQs) from qualified firms and individuals to serve as a Rate Consultant for the GSA.

BACKGROUND

The Eastern Management Area (EMA) GSA includes the Santa Barbara County Water Agency, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, City of Solvang, and the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1. The EMA GSA Committee unanimously endorsed the proposed JPA Agreement at its May 23, 2024 meeting.

The Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin is designated as a medium-priority basin and is subject to SGMA. Public agencies in the Basin created three GSAs representing the three main areas of the Basin (Western, Central, and Eastern Management Area). Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for each management area were submitted to the California Department of Water Resources for review in January of 2022. All three GSPs were approved by DWR in January 2024.

PROJECT SCOPE

The precise scope of work will be approved by the EMA GSA Board in consultation with the successful individual or firm for this RFQ. The successful individual or firm will enter into a contract with the EMA GSA. The scope of the work as Rate Consultant would likely include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Review examples of current SGMA taxes, fees, rates, and/or charges adopted by other Groundwater Sustainability Agencies in other basins;
2. Evaluate tax/fee/rate/charge alternatives that may be pursued by the EMA GSA;
3. Review and provide input on annual and multi-year budget(s) prepared for the EMA GSA;
4. Coordinate with the EMA Executive Director, EMA Board of Directors, staff from the EMA member agencies, the EMA Citizens Advisory Group, and representatives from the Western and Central Management Areas

5. Prepare draft and final rate study to develop tax/fee/rate/charge structure to reimburse member agency cost contributions and fund the costs of GSA administration, and SGMA and GSP implementation;
6. Help organize and participate in public outreach campaign during draft and final rate study processes, and present draft and final rate studies during public workshops, meetings, and required hearings.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS SUBMITTALS

At a minimum, please provide the following information in support of your response to this RFQ. Note that straightforward pertinent information is encouraged rather than general company brochures. Please limit your response to 20 pages (excluding any attached resumes).

General Firm Information

Please provide information on your firm's location, number of employees, years in business, etc.

Applicable Experience

Please provide a description of your firm's recent and relevant experience related to the types of activities listed in the scope of work above. Please provide a description of your firm's specific experience in relevant areas over the last five (5) years. A description of each project should include:

- When the work was performed, including the duration of the project;
- The client for whom the work was performed (unless confidential; if so, please note as such);
- A general description of the scope of work;
- The outcome of the project, i.e. did the project meet its objectives?
- Contact information, including a telephone number and email address, of the project manager, and key team members associated with the project.

Project Team Information

Please identify the personnel from your firm that will be directly involved in providing services to the GSA. Please provide resumes with relevant experience. The consultant may be a team of different firms, and if so identify the firms in the team and principle point(s) of contact. Consultants may also utilize sub-consultants, and if so please identify the sub-consultants. If the proposal is a team approach and/or includes sub-consultants, please provide the estimated percentage of the overall effort in terms of projected costs for each team member or sub-consultant.

Project Approach

Please provide a discussion of your firm's ideas with respect to implementing the project scope in a cost-effective and timely manner. Please present your perspective on key priorities, and potential risk factors and their mitigation.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Please also provide the following:

Proprietary Statement

Firms submitting qualifications must provide a statement that nothing contained in the submittal or subsequent interview (if applicable) is proprietary, however, if proprietary information is included, a statement should be provided identifying any specific information which the consultant contends is proprietary or confidential and the basis for such a claim.

Insurance

In a table, confirm the Consultant's and sub-consultant's (if applicable) ability to secure insurance coverage (including comprehensive general liability, professional liability, automotive liability, and workers compensation).

Consulting Rates and Other Costs

Please provide information regarding personnel rates and any other unit costs that may be applied for this project (e.g. copies, computer usage, travel, etc.).

SELECTION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Prior to award of a contract the EMA GSA may schedule a meeting with selected consultants to provide the consultant an opportunity to describe their qualifications with the GSA Board of Directors or a committee thereof, and to answer questions regarding the consultant's qualifications.

An award of contract may be made to the consultant who provides the best overall response to the requirements of this RFQ. The EMA GSA may select whichever consultant it determines will best serve its interests. The EMA GSA may select more than one consultant. Upon completion of the evaluation process, initial discussions may be conducted between the EMA GSA and consultants to clarify the scope of services, staffing schedules, level of effort, and contract costs. The EMA GSA will then enter final negotiations with the selected consultant with the intent of agreeing on a mutually acceptable contract.

Due Date, Number of Submittals, and Contact Information

One hard copy and one electronic copy should be submitted to:

Paeter Garcia
Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1
P.O. Box 157
Santa Ynez, CA 93460

Qualification submittals should be received no later than 12:00 p.m. on July 26, 2024.

Questions can be directed to Paeter Garcia by phone at (805) 688-6015 or by email at pgarcia@syrwd.org.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

All submitters are hereby advised that this RFQ is an informal solicitation and is not a commitment or offer to enter into an agreement or engage into any competitive bidding or negotiations pursuant to any statute, ordinance, rule, or regulation. The submitter understands and agrees to the following:

- A. The GSA reserves the right to negotiate with any qualified source.
- B. The GSA reserves the right to reject any or all submittals for any reason or for no reason at all.
- C. The GSA reserves the right to request further information from the submitters either in writing or orally. Such request will be addressed to that person or persons authorized by the submitter to represent the submitter.
- D. The GSA reserves the sole right to judge the submitters' representations, either written or oral.
- E. Submitters understand and agree that a submittal constitutes acknowledgement and acceptance of, and a willingness to comply with, all the terms, conditions, and criteria contained in this RFQ.
- F. False, incomplete, or unresponsive statements in connection with a submittal may be sufficient cause for the rejection of the submittal. The valuation and determination of the fulfillment of the above requirements will be the GSA's responsibility and its decision shall be final.
- G. The GSA reserves the right to interpret or change any provisions of this RFQ at any time prior to the submission date. Such interpretations or changes will be in the form of addenda to this RFQ.
- H. All submittals in response to this RFQ will become the exclusive property of the GSA. At such time as the GSA consultant selection appears on the GSA Board Agenda, all such submittals become a matter of public record, and shall be regarded as public records, with the exception of those parts of each submittal which are defined by the submitter as business or trade secrets, and so marked as "confidential" or "proprietary". The GSA shall not in any way be liable or responsible for the disclosure of any such submittals (or any part thereof) if disclosure of any such submittal or any part thereof is required under the Public Records Act.
- I. The GSA shall not in any way be liable for any costs incurred in connection with the preparation of any submittal in response to this RFQ.