

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

FOR GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY DATA REVIEW, FEE ANALYSIS, AND RATE SETTING SERVICES

RFQ Issue Date: August 9, 2022

Statement of Qualifications Deadline: **September 6, 2022, 4:00 PM**

Issued by:

Colusa Groundwater Authority

Contact Person:

Colusa Groundwater Authority
Program Manager
Carol Thomas-Keefer
cthomaskeeper@rgs.ca.gov

1. Introduction

The Colusa Groundwater Authority (CGA) is requesting qualification submittals from consultants with experience in data and fee analysis and rate setting for public agencies. The CGA is primarily interested in the consultant's experience in relation to setting fees pursuant to Propositions 26 and 218, specifically as they relate to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Services provided may include all tasks necessary to evaluate, develop options, select, and implement a funding mechanism. This will include a review of the CGA's previous fee study, evaluation of fee alternatives, development of fee/rate schedules to fund the costs of Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) implementation and ongoing administration of the CGA. Services may also include the development of outreach materials and presentations at various Board, Advisory, and community meetings.

If the CGA awards a contract for services as a result of this request for qualifications (RFQ), a Scope of Work will be negotiated, and a contract will be executed establishing the terms and compensation for the subject services. The CGA does not guarantee work to any qualified firm or consultant.

Submittals must be received by **September 6, 2022 at 4:00 PM** to be considered for this opportunity.

All Potential Respondents should note that it is their responsibility to:

- Read carefully all of the contents of this entire RFQ.
- Ask for clarification in writing before submission due dates.
- Address all requirements and follow all procedures of this RFQ.
- Immediately inform the RFQ Contact Person of any problems with this RFQ solicitation.
- Submit all responses by the required dates and times.

2. Background

In September 2014, the California legislature enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to require sustainable groundwater management statewide. SGMA applies to all high and medium priority groundwater basins as determined by the Department of Water Resources. Implementation of SGMA is achieved through the formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) and the preparation and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs).

The Colusa Subbasin is a high priority basin required to be managed under SGMA and is shared between Glenn and Colusa Counties. Two GSAs coordinated on developing a single GSP, which was submitted to the Department of Water Resources in January 2022. The first required Annual Report was submitted in April 2022.

The CGA governs the Colusa County portion of the subbasin through a Joint Powers Agreement which includes twelve participating agencies.

In 2018, the GGA retained a consultant to assist with a Proposition 218, Majority Protest Process. This effort produced a fee study in March 2019. The study covers proposed fee schedules for fiscal years 2019/2020 through 2023/2024. The maximum assessment proposed in the fee study is \$1.21 per acre. After an extensive process, on June 5, 2019, CGA held a public hearing to consider adopting the CGA operations fee. Absent a majority protest, the CGA Board adopted Resolution 2019-02 "Resolution Certifying the Results of a Proposition 218 Majority Protest Proceeding and Setting the Authority's Operations Fee".

The Resolution established a maximum fee of \$1.21 per acre and \$1.21 per acre for the 2019/2020 year. Each year, the CGA reconsiders and adopts the operations fee. In 2020/2021 the fee was set at \$1.00 per acre, which was maintained in 2021/2022. The fee remains at \$1.00 per acre for fiscal year 2022/2023.

It has been the intent of the CGA to re-evaluate the fee structure at the conclusion of the GSP planning process as the CGA shifts to the implementation of the GSP. The GSP was completed and submitted to the Department of Water Resources for review in January 2022.

3. Project Description and Scope of Services

The CGA is seeking to conduct a new/updated rate study to identify funding mechanisms for implementation of the Colusa Subbasin GSP and ongoing administration of the CGA. The CGA expects this project will build on previous efforts and conduct all tasks necessary to evaluate, develop options, select, and implement a funding mechanism appropriate for the GSP implementation phase. Respondents are expected to be familiar with laws and regulations pertaining to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, Proposition 26, and Proposition 218.

Services provided may include, but are not limited to:

- Review of the Colusa Subbasin GSP and initial budget and implementation plan
- Review of meeting summaries related to discussions on funding mechanisms
- Evaluation of potential fee alternatives
- Recommendations on selecting an appropriate mechanism and process to implement a fee
- Development of a fee study or Engineers Report as appropriate
- Development of outreach materials
- Presentations to the CGA, advisory committees, or public
- Updating parcel information
- Complying with any ballot, hearing, protest, vote, or other requirement
- Preparing necessary files to place the fee on the County's tax roll
- Related tasks

The CGA anticipates developing draft implementation budgets by early summer 2023, and the project completed with submittal of data files to Colusa County and Yolo County in early August 2023.

4. Qualifications

a) Firm's Background and Experience

- i. Discussion of the firm's experience in water rate studies, cost of service analysis, and rate design services for agencies of similar size, and services provided.
- ii. Discussion of the firm's experience working with GSAs and services provided.
- iii. Experience and qualifications of project manager and key project staff.

b) Firm's Data Analysis Experience

- i. Discussion of the firm's experience in data analysis in communities with similar composition of groundwater users.

- ii. Discussion of the firm’s GIS capabilities, experience, and preferred software.
- c) Experience with 5-year revenue requirement projections for recently formed agencies
 - i. Discussion of the firm’s experience with short to mid-range financial planning for relatively new public agencies and development of fees/rates to cover projected expenses for administration and anticipated projects/programs.
- ci) Experience with fee and rate design and implementation
 - i. Discussion of experience working with Boards, committees, and stakeholders in the rate design process.
 - ii. Experience with creating compelling community outreach information pertaining to fees and rates.
- cii) Additional pertinent information the CGA should consider.
- ciii) Ability to perform work subject to the following tentative schedule:

September/October 2022	Work with GSA Staff and Boards to create and finalize scope of services and total compensation
October/November 2022	Commence Work
November 2022-June 2023	Proceed with working including significant input from Boards, advisory committees, stakeholders, and staff
July 2023	Final Report and recommendations to CGA
August 2023	Submit appropriate files to Colusa and Yolo Counties for inclusion of fee on Tax Roll

5. Submission Requirements

Statement of qualifications should be emailed to Carol Thomas-Keefer, CGA Program Manager at cthomaskeefer@rgs.ca.gov. **Late or incomplete submittals will not be considered.**

1. Cover Letter (no longer than two pages)

The cover letter shall include the name and address of the respondent submitting the proposal, together with the name, address and telephone number of the contact person who will be authorized to make representations for the respondent, the respondent's federal tax ID number and a list of subcontractors/subconsultants, if any. The cover letter shall include a statement that the proposal is valid for 90 days after receipt. The cover letter should convey a clear understanding of the requirements and objectives, and why the respondent is uniquely qualified to be awarded a contract.
2. Respondent’s Qualifications

Responses to the items in the Qualifications Section of this RFQ.
3. Proposed Respondent Team

The statement of qualifications shall identify the Project Manager who will be primarily responsible for providing services to the CGA, and other staff to be assigned to the team. Please

include the qualifications, training, and certification of the Project Manager, and all other staff who will perform the services outlined herein. Include a resume for each, listing education, experience, and expertise in this type of work.

4. Fee Schedule

This section shall identify the billing rates for listed personnel, as well as other costs or expensed that would be charged in connection with the work.

5. Conflicts

This section should identify whether the respondent anticipates it would need to obtain conflict waivers from any existing clients and how the respondent anticipates addressing any potential conflicts with respect to any member agencies of the CGA.

6. References

The name, addresses, email address, and telephone number of three public agency clients who have contracted with the Respondent for services similar to those described in this RFQ within the last five years.

7. Proposed Scope of Work and Schedule

Submit an outline of a proposed scope of work and schedule that demonstrates how the consultant would proceed with work within the timeframe specified, the proposed project elements, tentative list of data needs, outreach to Boards, advisory committees, and stakeholders, and approach to community engagement. This should include a high-level approach to major tasks that are typically involved in completing fee studies, with the understanding the final scope of work will be negotiated after the award of a contract.

6. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the CGA in evaluating submissions:

1. Experience and demonstrated competence of the identified key areas of service outlined in the Qualifications section of this RFQ.
2. Reference recommendations.
3. Comprehensive consultant fee schedule.
4. Thoroughness of submission.

The CGA reserves the right to award a contract based on written responses only; however, oral presentations and written questions for further clarification may be required of some or all the respondents at no cost to the CGA. The CGA reserves the right to select more than one (1) contractor or no contractors.

7. Schedule

The following schedule is estimated and subject to change.

Event	Anticipated Date/Time (Subject to Change)
Issue Request for Qualifications	August 9, 2022
Final Date to Submit Questions and Request Clarification	August 16, 2022, 4:00 PM
Questions Answered via Addendum(s)	August 22, 2022, 4:00 PM
Closing date for Request for Qualifications	September 6, 2022, 4:00 PM
Presentation/Demonstration (if desired)	September 19-23, 2022

8. General Information

Any and all communication regarding this solicitation shall be in writing and directed to:

Colusa Groundwater Authority Program Manager
Carol Thomas-Keefer
CThomasKeefer@rgs.ca.gov

This person will serve as the GSA contact for this solicitation and will develop any necessary addendums to the solicitation to provide clarifications if necessary. **DO NOT** contact other GSA staff, Board members, or Selection Committee members regarding this project or selection procedures. Failure to adhere to these instructions may result in disqualification.

Questions and requests for clarification may only be submitted by e-mail to the contact listed above. Verbal, fax, and phone inquiries will not be answered. All questions and requests for clarification shall be submitted no later than **August 16, 2022**. The GSAs reserve the right to decline a response to any question on a case-by-case basis. The GSAs will provide answers and clarifications by posting an addendum(s) on their websites by **August 22, 2022** so all potential Respondents receive consistent information. It is the responsibility of all interested firms to access the website for this information. **Questions received after August 16, 2022 will not be answered.**

9. Disclosure of Information

All information and materials submitted to the CGA in response to this RFQ may be reproduced by the CGA for the purpose of providing copies to authorized GSA staff and selection committee members involved in the evaluation of the proposals, but shall be exempt from public inspection under the California Public Records Act until such time as a Contract is executed. Bid awards are a matter of public record. Once a Contract is executed, proposals submitted in response to this RFQ are subject to public disclosure as required by law. Your submission of a proposal is considered your consent to the GGA's disclosure of the proposal. The CGA shall not be liable for disclosure of any information or records related to this procurement.