

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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

RFP Issue Date: September 24, 2022

Statement of Qualifications Deadline: **October 14, 2024, 4:00 PM**

Issued by:

Colusa Groundwater Authority

Contact Person:

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

1. Introduction

The Colusa Groundwater Authority (CGA) is requesting proposals from consultants with experience in data and fee analysis and rate setting for public agencies to assist with development and implementation of 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, committee and community meetings.

If the CGA awards a contract for services as a result of this request for proposals (RFP), a Scope of Work will be finalized, 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 **October 14, 2024 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 RFP.
- Ask for clarification in writing before submission due dates.
- Address all requirements and follow all procedures of this RFP.
- Immediately inform the RFP Contact Person of any problems with this RFP 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. In October 2023, DWR issued a determination of "Incomplete" for the Colusa Subbasin GSP and provided a 180-day period for the GSP to be revised pursuant to DWR's recommendations. In April 2024, the two GSAs adopted and resubmitted a revised GSP to the State; DWR has stated it expects to provide a determination on the revised GSP by the end of 2024.

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

In 2018, the CGA retained a consultant to assist with a Proposition 218 Majority Protest Process. This effort produced a fee study in March 2019. The study covered proposed fee schedules for fiscal years 2019/2020 through 2023/2024. The maximum assessment proposed in the fee study was \$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, and this rate was maintained through 2023/24. The CGA Board maintained the existing fee structure for 2024/25, setting the fee at \$1.21 per acre.

With the GSP planning process nearing completion, the CGA Board wishes to re-evaluate the current fee structure in order to support implementation of the revised GSP. The revised GSP includes programs for activities such as demand management and well mitigation, with associated implementation timelines.

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 revised 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 one or more funding mechanisms 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 to be provided may include, but are not limited to:

- Review of the revised Colusa Subbasin GSP, budget and implementation plan
- Review of meeting summaries related to discussions on funding mechanisms
- Review of documents previously prepared in support of a new fee structure
- Evaluation of potential fee alternatives with periodic and timely supporting documents and data provided to the Board and/or ad hoc committee
- 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, board 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 is working on a parallel track to prepare draft implementation budgets for GSP activities and expects these budgets to be available by early 2025 for use in fee development. A proposed fee structure should be presented to the CGA Board for adoption no later than July 2025 with submittal of data files to Colusa County and Yolo County in early August 2025.

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.

d) 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.

e) Additional pertinent information the CGA should consider.

f) Ability to perform work subject to the following tentative schedule:

October/November 2024	Work with GSA Staff and Boards to create and finalize scope of services and total compensation
November/December 2024	Commence Work
November 2024-June 2025	Proceed with work, including significant input from Boards, committees, stakeholders, and staff
July 2025	Final Report and recommendations to CGA
August 2025	Submit appropriate files to Colusa and Yolo Counties for inclusion of fee on Tax Roll

5. Submission Requirements

Proposals 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 RFP.

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. Proposed Fee and Fee Schedule

This section shall identify the proposed cost of providing the requested work along with billing rates for listed personnel, as well as other costs or expenses 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, 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 RFP.

2. Reference recommendations.
3. Comprehensive consultant fee schedule.
4. Proposed approach to fee structure development.

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 Proposals	September 24, 2024
Final Date to Submit Questions and Request Clarification	October 1, 2024, 4:00 PM
Questions Answered via Addendum(s)	October 7, 2024, 4:00 PM
Closing date for Request for Qualifications	October 14, 2024, 4:00 PM
Presentation/Demonstration (if requested by CGA)	October 17-22, 2024

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 **October 1, 2024**. The GSA reserves the right to decline a response to any question on a case-by-case basis. CGA will provide answers and clarifications by posting an addendum(s) on its website by **October 7, 2024** 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 October 1, 2024 will not be answered.**

9. Disclosure of Information

All information and materials submitted to the CGA in response to this RFP 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 RFP are subject to public disclosure as required by law. Your submission of a proposal is considered your consent to the CGA's disclosure of the proposal. The CGA shall not be liable for disclosure of any information or records related to this procurement.