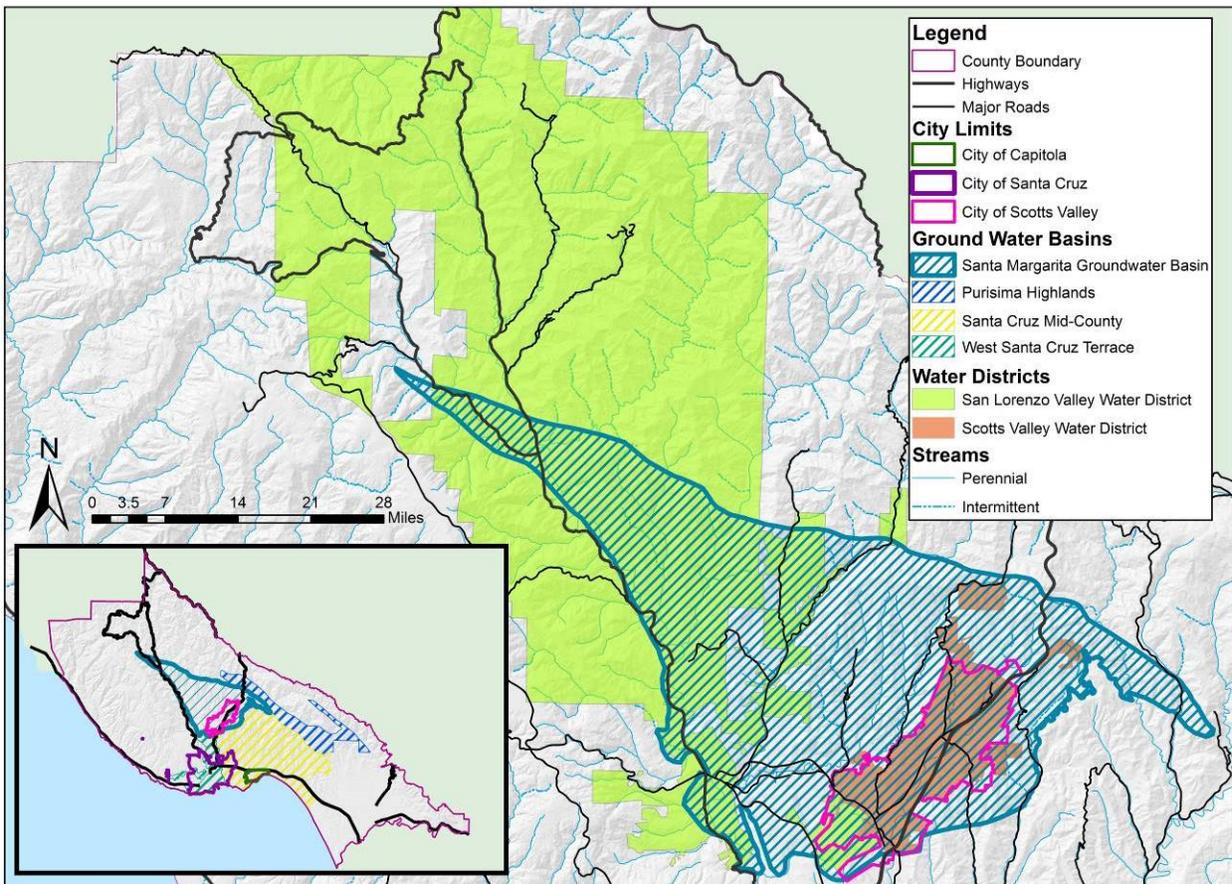


SANTA MARGARITA Groundwater Agency

Request for Qualifications for Facilitation Services for the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency



Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin

Request for Qualifications for Facilitation Services for the Santa Margarita
Groundwater Agency

Statements of Qualifications Due: 4:00 p.m., February 12, 2018

I. Request for Qualifications

The Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA or Agency) is soliciting Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) from individuals or firms with expertise in public agency governing board consensus building, process design and facilitation.

The SMGWA has not yet determined the extent or type of consensus building, process design or facilitation services that will be employed and will consider suggested options or proposals made as part of the SOQ submittals as well as approaches described in SOQs based on responder's experience elsewhere.

II. Background – Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency

A. Requirement for Groundwater Sustainability Plan

California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) became law on January 1, 2015. SGMA provides local agencies with the tools to manage groundwater basins in a sustainable manner over the long-term and allows for limited state intervention when necessary to protect groundwater resources. It required the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) to establish a definition of sustainable groundwater management, coordinate the formation of local groundwater sustainability agencies, prioritize basins with the most urgent needs (ranked as high and medium) and set a timeline for the completion and implementation of the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). GSPs will replace groundwater management plans that were developed under AB3030 which included some of the GSP elements but did not include State mandated sustainability indicators or mandatory deadlines to reach sustainable groundwater management goals. In contrast, SGMA requires medium and high priority basins to make measurable progress toward sustainability, to report that progress annually, and to achieve ongoing sustainability. The Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin is most likely a medium priority basin (to be confirmed by DWR in early 2018), which must prepare a GSP by 2022 and achieve sustainability by 2042.

B. Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency

In 1994, the Scotts Valley Water District developed and implemented a groundwater management plan under the provisions of AB 3030. A year later, the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin Advisory Committee was formed to cooperatively manage the groundwater in the basin. The members of the committee comprised Scotts Valley Water District, San Lorenzo Valley Water District, Lompico County Water District, City of Scotts Valley and County of Santa Cruz.

In June of 2017, the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) was formed through the adoption of a joint powers agreement by the member agencies: the San Lorenzo Valley Water District, the Scotts Valley Water District, and the County of Santa Cruz. Each member agency appointed two directors to the eleven-member SMGWA Board of Directors. The five remaining directors include two representatives of private well owners, a representative of the Mt. Hermon Association Community Water System, a representative of the City of Scotts Valley, and a representative of the City of Santa Cruz.

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By August 2017, all directors had been appointed and the board commenced their regular bi-monthly meeting schedule. The board elected officers, adopted bylaws, selected an attorney, adopted a budget for fiscal year 2018, established basic principles for its operations and begun the education process for the board and interested members of the public about the groundwater resources and the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, including the requirement to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by January 2022.

III. Facilitation Services

Prior to beginning to work on the development of the GSP, the board would like to engage in a joint goal setting process that would allow them to establish a solid foundation for the planning work that will be required during the GSP development effort. Specific outcomes from this joint goal setting process would include at minimum the following:

- Building trust among board members and the agencies that are represented on the board;
- Providing an opportunity for diverse perspectives that may be held by various board members to be shared and understood by other board members;
- Identifying common goals and perspectives and looking for ways to build agreement around other goals and perspectives so that the board will have a solid foundation for the future work on developing the GSP
- Providing the facilitator with the information needed to develop a design for the GSP development process that will meet the requirements of the applicable regulations as well as the needs of the SMGWA's Board and other basin interests.

Initial approach for the joint goal setting effort is that it would include an assessment and engagement of the SMGWA member agencies' (San Lorenzo Valley Water District, Scotts Valley Water District governing bodies in addition to the SMGWA board of directors), with the goal of maximizing the potential for achieving the objectives outlined in the bullets above, facilitating the joint goal setting process with the SMGWA board, and then presenting the results to the member agencies' governing bodies.

Following completion of the joint goal setting work, the facilitator would work with a committee, board, or staff of the SMGWA on designing the GSP development process, and support the implementation of that design through facilitation and other support services.

It is essential that the joint goal setting work, along with the design of the GSP development process, be finalized by the end of calendar year 2018 to ensure adequate time for completing the GSP.

IV. RFQ Process

A. Process

Parties interested in being considered to provide model evaluation services are requested to submit their SOQs on or before 4:00 p.m., February 12, 2018. SOQs will be evaluated by the Selection Committee comprised of SMGWA board members, with assistance from SGMWA support staff and technical experts, using the criteria established in Section V. The highest rated candidate will be asked to prepare a proposal for the purpose of negotiating a contract. Where no clear front-runner is determined, top ranked candidates may be asked for supplemental

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information and may be invited to interview with the Selection Committee. During the interview, the candidates may be asked to:

- Make an oral presentation, and/or
- Respond to a pre-determined set of questions.

Equal time and opportunity for resubmittals will be given to all responsive candidates should additional information be requested by the Agency. Any interviews will be scheduled on a mutually agreed upon date and will be at no cost to the Agency. The Selection Committee will use all available information to rate the candidates based on their ability to best meet the needs of the Agency.

B. Timeline

The tentative timeline for the selection process is as follows.

- February 2, 2018 ----- Deadline for questions to be submitted to Agency
- February 12, 2018----- SOQs due
- March 1, 2018 -----Complete SOQs evaluation and start negotiation with top-rated candidate
- April 27, 2018 ----- Finalize scope of work and execute contract

C. Information Disclosure to Third Parties

SOQs are a matter of public record and are open to inspection under the California Public Records Act. If any respondent claims any part of its SOQ is exempt from disclosure and copying, they must indicate it in the transmittal letter. By responding to this RFQ, respondents waive any challenge to the Agency’s decision in this regard.

If any SOQ contains confidential information, the respondent must clearly label and stamp the specific portions that are to be kept confidential. The respondent is urged to identify the truly confidential portions of the SOQ and not simply mark all or substantially all response as confidential. Notwithstanding the foregoing, respondents recognize that the Agency will not be responsible or liable in any way for loses that the respondents may suffer from the disclosure of information or materials to third parties.

D. SMGWA Rights and Options

The SMGWA, at its sole discretion, reserves the following rights:

1. To reject any, or all SOQs or information received pursuant to this RFQ;
2. To supplement, amend, substitute or otherwise modify this RFQ at any time by means of written addendum;
3. To cancel this RFQ with or without the substitution of another RFQ or prequalification process;
4. To request additional information;
5. To verify the qualifications and experience of each respondent;
6. To require one or more respondents to supplement, clarify or provide additional information in order for the Agency to evaluate the SOQs;
7. To hire multiple individuals/firms to perform the necessary duties and range of services if it is determined to be in the best interests of the Agency: and

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8. To waive any minor defect or technicality in any SOQ received.

E. Questions/Clarification Request

The respondent will, in the SOQ, identify the Project Manager and key staff. The Project Manager will be the primary contact for the Agency.

For the SMGWA, the primary contact is:

Amy Poncato, Administrative Assistant (aponcato@svwd.org)

During the SOQ process, interested parties are requested to direct all questions via email to the SMGWA's primary contact listed above.

V. Submittal of SOQs

The SOQs must provide the information requested and be organized into sections as follows:

- Cover Letter
- Firm/Individual Qualifications
- Key Project Staff Experience
- Client References

Direct responses to the following questions, will assist evaluators in considering the range of potential services that may ultimately be included in any contract:

- What experience have you had directly facilitating meetings and working with participants? How would you describe your effectiveness in this role as opposed to working strictly behind-the-scenes in the planning and designing of a collaborative process?
- Would the planning steps be different for a process in which your role is limited to behind the scenes versus a role that included both process planning and direct facilitation of the meetings?
- What are the critical factors for assuring an effective process, knowing that the goal-setting process is expected to take 8 months?
- What experience do you have working with technical consultants in a collaborative process, and what are the key factors required to make this relationship work most effectively?

A. Cover Letter

The SOQs must include a cover letter attesting to its accuracy, signed by an individual authorized to execute binding legal documents on behalf of the proposing firm. The cover letter shall provide the name, address, email, telephone and facsimile numbers of the proposed Project Manager, who will serve as the primary contact for the company.

B. Company Qualifications

The SOQs must describe examples of previous work involving board/advisory committee process planning, design and facilitation efforts for topics involving significant technical information, public policy issues, and committee members having varying interests and backgrounds. The examples must clearly demonstrate that the respondent has the experience, skill and expertise necessary to plan for and support the board in successfully completing its

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work. Preference will be given to respondents that have experience working with groups on issues related to water or impact based financial assessments.

C. Key Project Staff Experience and Qualifications

The SOQ must include a listing of all key personnel (including subconsultants when applicable) involved in performing the work. A description of their background, qualifications, and recent similar experience and responsibility must also be included. Clearly specify the individual designated as the Project Manager. The Agency requests a commitment from firms that key staff will not be reassigned during the contract period.

D. Client References

Please provide client references, including contact person and current telephone numbers. References should focus on projects in which the personnel listed in Item C had responsibilities.

VI. Evaluation Criteria and Selection

The SMGWA will evaluate each candidate's experience and expertise with public agency governing board consensus building, process design and facilitation. Firms/Individuals will be evaluated on the information presented in the SOQ. Final selection may be based on the SOQ as well as any supplemental information or interviews conducted. Evaluation factors used to select the top ranking candidates will include the following:

1. Qualifications as they relate to this project (50%).
 - a. Candidate's range of experience on similar projects and with the full range of duties that may be included in a contract.
 - b. Qualifications of proposed key personnel on similar projects and with the full range of duties that may be included in a contract.
 - c. Communication skills.
2. Apparent ability to provide the required services in a timely matter (25%).
 - a. Accessibility of staff.
 - b. Flexibility and readiness to complete specified work.
3. Candidate's reputation for successful completion of similar efforts, integrity and competence (25%).

The SMGWA will hold a question and answer conference call with prospective Project Managers, tentatively scheduled for early-February. To participate in the question and answer session, please contact Amy Poncato at aponcato@svwd.org by January 26, 2018.

Contract negotiations will begin immediately with the top ranked candidate after the evaluation process. If an agreement on scope and cost is not reached within thirty (30) working days, the next highest ranked candidate will be contacted and negotiations with that candidate will begin. This process will continue until an agreement is reached or it is decided to re-advertise.

If a clear choice is not evident, interviews will be scheduled with top ranking candidates.

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VII. Response Format

Five (5) copies of the Statement of Qualifications, as well as an electronic copy, to be submitted to Amy Poncato by the stated deadline. Statements of Qualifications should be no longer than 20 individual sheets in length (proposal may be printed on both sides of sheet), including resumes and attachments. Candidates are encouraged to use a double-sided format and recycled paper.

Parties interested in being considered for this project are requested to submit their Statements of Qualifications **by 4:00 p.m., February 12, 2018** to:

Amy Poncato, Administrative Assistant

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency

C/O Scotts Valley Water District

2 Civic Center Dr,

Scotts Valley, CA 95066

Submit electronic copies to: aponcato@svwd.org

The SMGWA reserves the right to determine the extent, duration and limit of the services. Such services will be described in an overall work program to be developed by the top ranked candidate and approved by the SMGWA promptly upon notification of selection. Any deviation from the scope and general work-hour duration of the work program must be approved beforehand in writing by the SMGWA.