

## **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

**THE PETALUMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY,  
THE SONOMA VALLEY GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY  
AND THE SANTA ROSA PLAIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY**

### **GSP IMPLEMENTATION SERVICES**

#### **Deadline for Submission**

**5:00 p.m., Friday, September 1, 2023**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Petaluma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency ("PV GSA"), the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency ("SRP GSA") and the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency ("SV GSA"), (collectively "GSAs"), are seeking qualifications from consultants or firms with experience in providing services associated with Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) implementation, including water use efficiency studies and program implementation, development of voluntary well metering programs, hydrogeologic characterization programs, groundwater recharge planning and investigations, and monitoring well design and construction oversight.

Applicants are not expected to have experience in all aspects of work described. Teams of firms are acceptable but not necessary. A list of qualified firms will be developed and used over the next three to five years. No specific projects have been identified. The GSAs do not guarantee work to any qualified firm. This is not a bid process.

#### **II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

On September 14, 2014, Governor Brown signed into law three bills collectively referred to as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). SGMA requires the formation of groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) in state-designated medium and high priority basins. Sonoma County has three basins that must comply with SGMA (Petaluma Valley, Santa Rosa Plain and Sonoma Valley) and in 2017 a GSA was created in each basin.

The GSAs were formed for the purpose of developing, adopting, and implementing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for each basin to implement SGMA's requirements and achieve the sustainability goals outlined in SGMA. The three GSPs were approved by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) in January 2023. The GSAs are now working to implement the GSPs and are seeking support services for that implementation.

Through contracts with the GSAs, Sonoma Water currently provides technical services for implementing the technical tasks described in the GSP, including developing and submitting annual reports to DWR;

annual monitoring and reporting of groundwater levels and other sustainability indicators; filling data gaps; improving the groundwater model; and planning for projects and management actions. Sonoma Water subcontracts with consultants to assist with specific aspects of these tasks.

In the future, the GSAs plan to also contract directly with consultants for specific technical services related to GSP implementation. Portions of this work have been recommended for funding under the Sustainable Groundwater Management (SGM) Implementation Round 2 Grant. Grant Application Work Plans are available on our website at: [sonomacountygroundwater.org/RFP/](http://sonomacountygroundwater.org/RFP/).

### **III. SCOPE OF WORK**

Section 7 of the GSPs provides the implementation plan which describes the scope and schedule for activities needed to comply with the SGMA and achieve sustainability by 2042. Updated Five-Year schedules for the primary tasks and activities associated with implementing the GSP are included as an attachment. Services requested may include, but are not limited to:

- development of voluntary well metering programs;
- water use efficiency assessments and program implementation;
- hydrogeologic characterization programs;
- monitoring well design and construction; and
- groundwater recharge planning and investigations.

Applicants are not expected to have experience in all aspects of the services described. Teams of firms are acceptable but not necessary. A list of qualified firms will be developed and used over the next three to five years on an as-needed basis for specific tasks and programs. The following provides a summary of the primary near-term technical services grouped by the general type of service likely to be requested by the GSA. More detailed descriptions of these tasks are included in the attached SGM Implementation Grant Application Work Plans under the tasks and subtasks referenced below.

#### **Services related to demand management and water-use efficiency**

Development of voluntary metering programs (Task 2-1a): This task is anticipated to include:

- Preparation of a metering plan to identify objectives of the metering program, recommendations on meter types and requirements, installation and maintenance instructions, reporting and data management;
- support for outreach efforts; and
- installation, initial calibration, and training to well operators.

Assessment and analysis of existing groundwater demands and prioritization of WUE Measures (Task 3-1a): The objective of this task is to characterize and evaluate existing groundwater demands for their conservation potential to develop informed, targeted, and cost-effective WUE programs and incentives. The assessment will include:

- compile and evaluate existing data and estimates of groundwater demands;
- perform an assessment of indoor and outdoor groundwater demands for rural residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial users;
- perform targeted outreach to groundwater users to include input on the feasibility of various conservation and alternative sources of supply opportunities through online survey tools, focus groups, and stakeholder meetings;

- identify specific metrics for evaluating the benefits of the WUE measures; and
- use the results from the preceding steps to develop a WUE pilot program work plan, which will prioritize and outline recommended water demand reduction actions for private well users, as well as related outreach and education measures.

Pilot Program for WUE Measures (Task 3-1b): The objective of this task is to develop a pilot program for implementing the WUE program prioritization plan developed in Task 3-1a and make the recommended WUE tools and incentives available to groundwater users on a voluntary basis.

**Services related to hydrogeologic characterization for monitoring network improvements and project planning:**

Monitoring Network Design and Construction Oversight (Task 2-2b, c): The task will include the siting, design, and construction oversight of:

- Deep (~500 foot) multi-level monitoring wells for the groundwater-level RMP Networks,
- Multi-level monitoring wells for the seawater intrusion RMP networks, and
- Shallow aquifer system monitoring wells for the interconnected surface water RMP networks.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Planning (Task 4-2):

- Perform hydrogeologic investigations of areas within the Subbasins/Basin where focused ASR projects can help achieve MOs and avoid undesirable results.

Stormwater Capture and Recharge Planning (Task 4-3): This task will include site-specific investigations, modeling, and pilot studies of on-farm and other dispersed recharge opportunities that consider and include the following:

- Water available for recharge, including any water rights considerations and permitting needs and approaches
- Areas with permeable near-surface soils and sufficient depth to the water table
- Optimal methods and techniques
- Support for outreach to interested landowners with locations that could help sustain baseflows to streams and support GDEs

Many of the GSAs' projects are grant funded and therefore shall comply with the terms and conditions of the relevant grant and any applicable State of California requirements, laws, and regulations, including prevailing wage laws. All work that is completed under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Implementation Round 2 grant, must be completed by February 2026. Additional information about this grant, including a template grant agreement, is available at <https://water.ca.gov/work-with-us/grants-and-loans/sustainable-groundwater>.

**IV. SCHEDULE**

To the extent achievable, the following schedule shall govern the RFQ. The GSAs reserve the right to modify the dates below.

EVENT	KEY DATES
Availability of the Request for Qualifications	July 28, 2023 – September 1, 2023
Deadline for Submission of Questions	August 9, 2023
Closing date for the Request for Qualifications	September 1, 2023
Interviews (if needed)	September 25 and 26, 2023

Questions must be emailed to [info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org](mailto:info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org) by 5 p.m., Monday, August 9, 2023. Submissions must be emailed to [info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org](mailto:info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org) by 5 p.m., Friday, September 1, 2023. Large submissions may be transmitted via Dropbox or another file-sharing site, but an email with the file location and access information must be sent to [info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org](mailto:info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org) by 3 p.m., Friday, September 1, 2023.

**V. QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Experience and qualifications commensurate with any of the services described in Section III being offered by respondent.

**VI. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Submissions must be emailed to [info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org](mailto:info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org) by 5 p.m., Friday, September 1, 2023. Large submissions may be transmitted via Dropbox or another file-sharing site, but an email with the file location and access information must be sent to [info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org](mailto:info@petalumavalleygroundwater.org) by 3 p.m., Friday, September 1, 2023. A sample agreement is enclosed. Please review the entire sample agreement carefully before submitting a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ).

1. **Cover letter** (no longer than 1 page): The cover letter should convey a clear understanding of the requirements and objectives, identify any specific tasks or services described in Section III which the firm is responding to, and indicate why the respondent is uniquely qualified to perform the specific tasks or services.
2. **Respondent’s Qualifications:** Summary of overall qualifications and experience of the respondent and statement of similar work previously performed for the specific tasks or services being offered by each respondent not to exceed 15 pages in length.
3. **Proposed Respondent Team:** The submission shall identify the Project Manager who will be primarily responsible for providing services to the GSAs, and other staff to be assigned to the team. Please include the qualifications, training, and certifications 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. Proposers shall also identify all subcontractors they intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, proposers shall indicate what products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor.
4. **Fee Schedule:** This section should identify billing rates for listed personnel.
5. **Conflicts:** Firms submitting proposals must disclose any actual, apparent, direct, or indirect, or potential conflicts of interest that may exist with respect to the firm, management, or employees

for the firm or other persons relative to the services to be provided. Respondent should also identify whether it anticipates it would need to obtain conflict waivers from any existing clients. Respondent should identify how they would address any potential conflicts with respect to any member agencies and/or between GSA(s).

6. **References:** Please provide the names, addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of three (3) public agency clients who have contracted with the respondent for services similar to those described in this RFQ being offered by the Respondent within the last five years.
7. **Sample Agreement Exceptions:** Any proposed exceptions to the indemnification, insurance, or other standard terms of the sample agreement. Please make comments as specific as possible. Exceptions not explicitly stated in the SOQ will not be considered during negotiations. Please note that proposing significant changes to standard terms may result in a lower evaluation score. If standard terms are acceptable, include the statement “No exception to standard terms.”

## **VII. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

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

1. Experience and demonstrated competence to perform the tasks and services described in Section III being offered by the respondent, as outlined in the Qualifications section of this RFQ.
2. To the extent two or more applicants are deemed equal in their qualifications, preference shall be given to those applicants with familiarity with groundwater management and key partners within the jurisdiction of the GSAs.
3. References and recommendations.
4. Comprehensive consultant fee schedule.
5. Thoroughness of submission.
6. Exceptions to standard terms in the sample agreement.

The GSAs reserve the right to award a contract based on written responses only, however oral presentations and written questions for further clarifications may be required of some or all the respondents.

## **VIII. MISCELLANEOUS**

### **1. Purchasing Policy**

This solicitation is conducted in accordance with the GSA Board approved Purchasing Policies.

### **2. SOQ Proposal Preparation, Interview and Negotiation Costs**

The GSA shall not be responsible for and/or shall not pay any costs associated with the preparation, proposal, or presentation of any SOQ, or costs incurred by the responding firms during any interview and negotiations phase of the solicitation process.

### **3. SOQ Withdrawal**

To withdraw a SOQ, the responding firm must submit a written request, signed by an authorized representative, to the GSA. After withdrawing a previously submitted SOQ, the responding firm may submit another SOQ at any time up to the deadline for submitting SOQs.

**4. SOQ Amendment**

The GSA shall not accept any amendments, revisions, or alterations to the SOQ after the deadline for the proposal.

**5. SOQ Errors**

Responding firms are liable for all errors or omissions contained in their SOQ. Responding firms shall not be allowed to alter SOQ documents after the deadline for submitting a SOQ.

**6. Incorrect SOQ Information**

If the GSA determines that a responding firm has provided, for consideration in the evaluation process or contract negotiations, incorrect information which the responding firm knew or should have known was materially incorrect, the SOQ may be rejected in the GSA's sole discretion.

**7. Prohibition of Respondent Terms and Conditions**

A responding firm may not submit the firm's own contract terms and conditions in a response to this RFQ. If a SOQ contains such terms and conditions, the GSA, at its sole discretion, may reject the SOQ.

**8. Insurance**

The apparent successful responding firm will be required to provide proof of insurance as set forth in the attached GSA's model contract prior to commencing work, and consistent with State law.

**9. RFQ Amendment and Cancellation**

The GSA reserves the unilateral right to amend this RFQ in writing at any time. The GSA also reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFQ at its sole discretion. The GSA shall post copies of the RFQ and amendments on the webpage [sonomacountygroundwater.org/RFP](http://sonomacountygroundwater.org/RFP) and it shall be the responsibility of the responding firm to monitor the posting of written responses.

Responding firms shall respond to the final written RFQ and any exhibits, attachments, and amendments.

**10. Right of Rejection**

- a. The GSA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any, and all SOQs or to cancel this RFQ in its entirety.
- b. Any SOQ received which does not meet the requirements of this RFQ may be considered non-responsive, and the SOQ may be rejected. Responding firms must comply with all the terms of this RFQ and all applicable state and local laws and regulations. The GSA may reject any SOQ that does not comply with all the terms, conditions, and performance requirements of this RFQ.
- c. Responding firms may not restrict the rights of the GSA or otherwise qualify their SOQs. If a responding firm does so, the GSA may determine the proposal to be a non-responsive counteroffer, and the SOQ may be rejected.
- d. The GSA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive variances in proposals provided such action is in the best interest of the GSA. Where the GSA waives variances in SOQs, such waiver does not modify the RFQ requirements or excuse the responding firm from full compliance with the RFQ. Notwithstanding any variance, the GSA may hold any responding firm to strict compliance with the RFQ.

**11. Disclosure of SOQ Contents**

All materials submitted in response to this RFQ procurement process become the property of the GSA. Selection or rejection of a SOQ does not affect this right. All SOQ information, including detailed price and cost information, shall be held in confidence during the evaluation and selection process. Upon the completion of the evaluation and selection process, indicated by approval of a contract for services emanating from this RFQ by the GSA Board or by rejection of all SOQs, the SOQs and associated materials shall be open for review by the public to the extent required by the California Public Records Act. By submitting a SOQ, the responding firm acknowledges and accepts that the contents of the SOQ and associated documents shall become open to public inspection.

**12. Proprietary Information**

A copy of each SOQ shall be retained for official files and will become public record after the award of a contract unless the SOQ or specific parts of the SOQ can be shown to be exempt by law. Each responding firm may clearly label part of a SOQ as "CONFIDENTIAL." The failure to so label any information that is released by the GSA shall constitute a complete waiver of all claims for damages caused by or related to any release of the information. If a public records request for labeled information is received by the GSA, the GSA will endeavor to notify the responding firm of the request. The responding firm shall have seven (7) working days after the GSA's receipt of the public records request to seek a protective order. Failure to so act shall constitute a complete waiver, and the GSA may release the documents marked "CONFIDENTIAL."