

Issue Date: May 1, 2023

**MERCED SUBBASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

No. 002

For

**Consultants for Strategic and Technical Services in Support of Groundwater Sustainability
Plan Implementation Activities**

Notice is hereby given that submissions will be received at the Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MSGSA) for performing all work necessary in accordance with the “REQUIREMENTS” and other related documents provided herein. Please carefully read and follow the instructions.

**Submissions shall be clearly marked with the Request for Qualifications Number and the
Submittal Deadline Date on the outside and forwarded to:**

Merced Subbasin GSA
C/O Merced County Community and Economic Development Department
2222 "M" Street Merced, California 95340
Attn: Lacey McBride
Email: Lacey.McBride@countyofmerced.com
Phone: (209) 385-7654

Any Respondent, who wishes their submission to be considered, is responsible for making certain that their proposal is received in the Merced County Community and Economic Development Department Office by the closing date.

**SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE DEADLINE WILL BE REJECTED AND WILL
BE RETURNED TO THE RESPONDENT UNOPENED.**

CLOSING DEADLINE DATE: 4:00 P.M., Monday May 22, 2023

**SUBMISSIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED LATE WHEN THE OFFICIAL
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TIME CLOCK
READS 4:01 P.M.**

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1 – Professional Services Agreement	
2 – Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan	
3 – Water Year 2022 Annual Report	
4 – Two Phased GSP Implementation Approach Resolution	



SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

All items are required. This checklist is provided to assist you in ensuring you submit a complete submission.

- A. _____ Cover Letter
- B. _____ Respondent's Qualifications
- C. _____ Proposed Respondent Team
- D. _____ Technical Approach
- E. _____ Fee Schedule
- F. _____ References
- G. _____ Signature Sheet (Attachment A)
- H. _____ Subcontractor List (Attachment B)



SECTION 1

INTENT OF THE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

This RFQ is soliciting for a consultant to provide as-needed strategic guidance to the MSGSA and its various committees on the development of the elements of a groundwater allocation policy, demand reduction management actions, and/or associated policies and management actions, including recharge policies among others, and implementation of GSP consistency determinations for proposed groundwater wells.

The successful Respondent will be expected to execute the Professional Services Agreement included with this RFQ as Exhibit 1.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MSGSA) is soliciting written responses (submittals) through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from qualified firms to provide professional on-call strategic and technical consulting services for a two year period related to the development of a groundwater allocation and demand reduction program and policies, in addition to other activities necessary to assist the MSGSA with elements of Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP; see Exhibits 2 and 3) implementation.

It is the intent of the MSGSA to enter into an agreement with a qualified consultant to provide the professional services described herein. The maximum total dollar amount for the agreement is \$200,000. The total fees paid to the consultant will be dependent upon the professional services performed for the projects.

This RFQ describes the Respondents qualifications to be evaluated, outlines the MSGSA's expectations, explains the review and selection process, and lists the submittal date for the Qualifications Statements.

1.2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Merced Subbasin GSA is located on the eastern side of Merced County in the San Joaquin Valley, one of the most productive agriculture regions in the world. The GSA is a joint powers agreement between seven public agencies (Merced County, Mariposa County, Amsterdam Water District, Le Grand-Athlone Water District, Stevinson Water District, Merquin County Water District, Plainsburg Irrigation District) and two mutual water companies (Lone Tree Mutual Water Company, Sandy Mush Mutual Water Company). The majority of water users in the GSA's jurisdiction are groundwater users, with some surface water rights and purchases. The MSGSA coordinates with two other

GSA's in the Merced Groundwater Subbasin to implement the Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

The MSGSA is pursuing a Management Action included in the GSP for groundwater demand reduction, which includes analyzing and considering various options for reducing groundwater use within the jurisdiction of the GSA. As a first step of implementing the Management Action the MSGSA adopted a Two Phased GSP Implementation Approach Resolution (see Exhibit 4) outlining the timing and activities of GSP implementation, which includes the development of a groundwater allocation program and fees.

Further, the MSGSA is responsible under Executive Order N-3-23 and the Merced County Groundwater Export and Mining Ordinance for the determination of consistency with the GSP of proposed new groundwater wells. The MSGSA has established an approach to developing these determinations and has processed several permit applications. The approach continues to be implemented and may be refined over time.

1.3. CONTRACT TERM

The Contract term shall be for a period of approximately two years, terminating on June 30, 2025, and may be extended at the discretion of the Board.

1.4. ORAL INTERVIEWS

Oral interviews may be held to allow MSGSA staff and representatives to discuss the Respondents' submissions. Those Respondents that have been deemed most qualified may be asked to make a presentation to the evaluation committee in support of their submissions. Interviews may be in person in Merced County or virtual. Location and dates will be determined after the close of the RFQ.

1.5. SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

To the extent achievable, the following schedule shall govern the review, evaluation and award of the submission. The MSGSA reserves the right to modify the dates below in accordance with its review process.

<u>Activity Estimated Schedule</u>	<u>Date</u>
a. Availability of the Request for Qualifications	05/01/23
b. Deadline for submission of interpretation and/or written questions	05/08/23
c. Response to written questions provided on website	05/11/23
d. Closing date for the Request for Qualifications	05/22/23

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| e. Oral interviews (if needed) | TBD |
| f. Award date | 06/08/23 |
| g. Contract to commence | July 2023 |



SECTION 2

REQUIREMENTS

2.1. SCOPE OF WORK

The details for each task will vary based on case-specific issues. Generally, the Respondent would be expected to perform the following tasks as necessary and at the direction of the MSGSA Governing Board or its designee:

1. Prepare and/or review any technical studies related, but not limited to: hydrological studies, geotechnical reports, and water quality analysis, where upon such tasks will help inform the MSGSA Governing Board. Tasks will most commonly focus on:
 - a. Analysis of historical, current and predicted future groundwater conditions, including use and quality, subsidence, surface water use, surface water-groundwater interaction, groundwater dependent ecosystems, climate and land use conditions among others.
 - b. Evaluation and assistance in implementation of management actions, rules and policies.
2. Prepare strategic recommendations for policy documents and outreach materials associated with demand reduction activities or groundwater allocation activities.
3. Attend, virtually or in-person, any necessary meetings with the MSGSA Governing Board and/or committees. Some meetings may require in-person attendance.
4. Peer review of technical reports prepared by other consultants.

Submittals should briefly describe the respondent's understanding and approach to this scope of work. Respondents are encouraged to provide alternative ideas, programs, formats, and suggestions throughout the submission, based on previous experience.

2.2. RESPONDENT QUALIFICATIONS

The selected Respondent shall have experience providing support in strategic policy development for decision maker consideration and developing easy to understand materials on complicated topics. Additionally, the Respondent shall have experience in preparing analyses of groundwater conditions, use and conveyance projects, particularly for activities involving groundwater pumping, aquifer recharge and demand reduction.

In addition to the above, the successful firm must be able to perform the following tasks:

1. Provide specialty hydrology services, especially as they may pertain to groundwater use and impacts on aquifer systems, well interference, stream flow depletion, land subsidence, land use intensification/conversion, aquatic

ecosystems, riparian ecosystems, interruption of infrastructure, weakening of groundwater rights, and creating economic hardship.

2. Map site, basin, aquifer, and associated data using GIS software (ESRI preferred).
3. Present at public meetings in regard to detailed policy development, groundwater conditions and/or impacts associated with GSP Implementation activities.
4. Respondent should submit information regarding the following:
 - a. Number of years in business as a consultant for groundwater conditions, management and analysis.
 - b. List of at least 3 similar contemporary (or in the last one or no more than three years) projects completed where groundwater analyses were required, along with the jurisdiction and nature of the work involved.
 - c. List staff to be assigned and their relevant experience, certifications, licenses, and qualifications.

2.3. LICENSES AND PERMITS

Respondent will ensure that firm and employees (if applicable) have necessary licenses and permits required by the laws of the United States, the State of California, the County and all other appropriate governmental agencies. Firm agrees to maintain these licenses and permits in effect for the duration of the Contract. Firm shall notify MSGSA immediately of loss or suspension of any such licenses and permits.

SECTION 3

PROPOSED SOLUTION

3.1. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Respondent's Statement of Qualifications shall be clear, accurate, comprehensive, and as concise as possible and shall include the Signature Page (see Attachment A) and Subcontractor List (See attachment B) followed by:

- A. Cover Letter (no longer than 1 page)**
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. An officer authorized to contractually bind the firm and to negotiate a contract with MSGSA shall sign the letter.
- B. Respondent's Qualifications**
Summary of overall qualifications and experience of the Respondent. Include the number of years in business as a consultant for groundwater conditions and analysis. Further, provide a description of at least 3 similar contemporary (or in the last one or no more than three years) projects completed where groundwater analyses were required, along with the jurisdiction and nature of the work involved, years performed, and key personnel involved in the project.
- C. Proposed Respondent Team**
Identify key personnel who will be assigned to the project, their responsibilities, qualifications and availability for this effort. Provide a 1-3 page resume in an appendix for each of the key personnel, noting relevant experience, certifications, and licenses. If subcontractors are included in the team, describe the responsibilities and qualifications of each firm.
- D. Technical Approach (no longer than 3 pages)**
A description of the techniques and methodologies that the Respondent is prepared to employ. Emphasis should be placed on hydrology and analysis of groundwater conditions, and the effects of concepts and management actions to reduce the consumptive use of groundwater.
- E. Fee Schedule**
This section should identify the billing rates for listed personnel, as well as other costs or expenses that would be charged in conjunction with the work.
- F. References**
The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three (3) clients who have contracted with the Respondent for services similar to those described in this RFQ within the last three years.

3.2. NUMBER OF COPIES TO BE SUBMITTED

Please submit **one (1) original signature hard copies** to be signed in blue ink (original copies marked as such) and **four (4)** exact copies of the original.



SECTION 4

SELECTION PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

4.1. BASIS OF SELECTION

The Respondent selected will be those whose submissions demonstrate to be the most qualified, responsive, and advantageous to the MSGSA. The MSGSA will make its selection in the best interests of the MSGSA after all factors have been evaluated.

THE MSGSA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL SUBMISSIONS OR ANY PART THEREOF, TO WAIVE ANY INFORMALITIES IN THE SUBMISSION AND MINOR IRREGULARITIES, TECHNICAL DEFECT OR CLERICAL ERRORS, TO MAKE AN AWARD ON THE BASIS OF SUITABILITY, QUALITY OF SERVICE(S) TO BE SUPPLIED, THEIR CONFORMITY WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS AND FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THEY ARE REQUIRED, AND NOT BE CONFINED TO COST ALONE.

False, incomplete, or non-responsive statements in connection with the submission may be deemed sufficient cause for rejection. The MSGSA shall be the sole judge in making such determination.

The MSGSA reserves the right to cancel or discontinue with the submission process and reject any or all submissions in the event it determines that there is no longer a requirement for the furnishing of such items, materials, equipment and/or services, funding is no longer available for this submission, or it is otherwise in the MSGSA's best interest to cancel the submission process.

Once the submissions for the RFQ have been received, the submissions will be reviewed and evaluated. Those Respondents that have been deemed most qualified may be asked to make a presentation to the evaluation committee in support of their submissions.

The evaluation committee will assess the consistency of the RFQ submission with information provided during the presentation; consider the technical knowledge in answering questions and explaining how the firm is best suited to the work; and assess appropriate experience and staff.

4.2. EVALUATION COMMITTEE

All submissions will be evaluated by a MSGSA Evaluation Committee. The Committee may be composed of staff and other parties that may have expertise or experience in environmental analysis and/or groundwater projects. The Committee will select Respondent in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFQ. The evaluation of the submissions shall be within the sole judgment and discretion of the Committee.

The Committee will evaluate each submission meeting the qualification requirements set forth in this RFQ. Respondents should bear in mind that any submission that is unrealistic in terms of the technical or schedule commitments will be deemed reflective of an inherent lack of technical competence or indicative of a failure to comprehend the complexity and risk of the MSGSA's requirements as set forth in this RFQ.

4.3. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The basic information that each section should contain is specified below, these specifications should be considered as minimum requirements. Much of the material needed to present a comprehensive submission can be placed into one (1) of the sections listed. However, other criteria may be added to further support the evaluation process whenever such additional criteria are deemed appropriate in considering the nature of the goods and/or services being solicited.

Each of the Evaluation Criteria below will be used in ranking and determining the quality of Respondents' submittal. The evaluation process may include a two-stage approach including an initial evaluation of the written submission and preliminary scoring to develop a short list of Respondents that may continue to the final stage of oral presentation and interview and reference checks. Scores may be updated after oral presentations have taken place.

The evaluation process is as follows:

1. After the period has closed for receipt of submissions, each submission is examined by MSGSA staff to determine compliance with the RFQ format requirements and grounds for rejection. This is not a public review.
2. Submissions cannot be changed by the Respondent after the time and date designated for receipt.
3. Submissions that meet the format requirements are submitted to the Evaluation Committee, which evaluates each submission and assigns points.
4. The Committee may conduct interviews and then re-score the submissions.
5. All Respondents are notified of the results.
6. Contents of materials that will be scored are listed below. These materials are requested in the order of the scoring criteria.

Project Narrative (100% in total)

- **Proposed Approach (15%)**
- **Organization and Staffing (20%)**
- **Project Specific Experience (45%)**
- **Price (20%)**

DEFINITIONS

Respondent - A person, partnership, firm, corporation, or joint venture submitting a bid submission for the purpose of obtaining a MSGSA Contract.

Closing Date/Time - The day and time the Request for Submission must be received in the office of the Merced County Community and Economic Development Department for acceptance.

Contract - Comprises the Request for Qualifications (RFQ), any addenda thereto, the bid proposal, the Professional Services Agreement and the purchase order if appropriate. The Contract constitutes the entire agreement between the MSGSA and the awarded Respondent.

Contractor - The Respondent or Vendor awarded the Contract derived from this Bid or RFQ.

Deliverable - The physical evidence such as documentation, certification of completion, hardware/software delivery, etc. which shows that a specific work has been completed as specified in the Scope of Work.

Evaluation Committee - A committee established to review and evaluate submissions to determine the Contract award. The committee includes representatives and staff of the MSGSA.

Formal Date of Award - Effective date the MSGSA Governing Board takes formal action to award the subject RFQ to the most responsive Respondent.

Goals/Tasks - A discrete unit of work to be performed.

Joint Ventures - Two or more corporations or entities that form a temporary union for the purpose of the RFQ.

May – Indicates something that is not mandatory but permissible.

MSGSA - Merced Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Must/Shall – Indicates a mandatory requirement. A submission that fails to meet a mandatory requirement will be deemed non-responsive and not be considered for award.

Notice of Intent to Award - Letter sent by MSGSA to all participating Respondents advising them of the date the MSGSA Governing Board will hear and possibly take action in awarding the Contract to the apparent successful Respondent as recommended by the Evaluation Committee.

Objectives/Sub-Tasks - Detailed activities that comprise the actual performance of the Goal/Task. The total of all Goals/Tasks and Objectives/Sub-Tasks makes up the “Scope of Work”.

Prime Contractor - The Respondent who is awarded the Contract and designated as the legal entity. The Prime Contractor will hereafter also be known as the Contractor. Any subcontracting, Joint Ventures, or other legal arrangements made by the Contractor during this project are the sole responsibility of the Contractor.

Submission Deadline - The closing date associated with this submission.

Scope of Work - The mutually agreed to document which describe tasks, dependencies, the sequence and timing of events, deliverables, and responsible parties associated with the various phases of the submission.

Subcontractors - Any person, entity or organization, to which Contractor or MSGSA has delegated any of its obligations hereunder.

Tasks – A discrete unit of work to be done

ATTACHMENT A

SIGNATURE PAGE

(RESPONDENT TO COMPLETE AND PLACE IN FRONT OF SUBMISSION)

INDIVIDUAL/COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____
(P.O. Box/Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

CONTACT PERSON: _____

TITLE: _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____ FAX NO. _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

The undersigned hereby certifies that he/she is a duly authorized official of their organization and has the authority to sign on behalf of the organization and assures that all statements made in the submission are true, agrees to furnish the item(s) and/or service(s) stipulated in this Request for Qualifications at the price stated herein, and will comply with all terms and conditions set forth, unless otherwise stipulated.

“I certify that I have read the contents of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and will comply with all requirements, unless otherwise noted by exception herein, as of the date and time of close of this RFQ”.

Authorized Representative - Name Title

Signature Date

Taxpayer Identification No.: _____



ATTACHMENT B

SUBCONTRACTOR LIST

SUBCONTRACTOR NO: 1 - COMPANY NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

AMT. OF CONTRACT: _____ DATE AND TYPE OF SERVICE _____

SUBCONTRACTOR NO: 2 - COMPANY NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

AMT. OF CONTRACT: _____ DATE AND TYPE OF SERVICE _____

SUBCONTRACTOR NO: 3 - COMPANY NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

AMT. OF CONTRACT: _____ DATE AND TYPE OF SERVICE _____

THIS PAGE MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED WITH SUBMISSION

