

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region (Regional Board) is issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for public agencies and non-profit organizations (501(c)(3)) for the project listed below. Further information on the Agricultural Water Quality Grants Program (AWQGP) under Proposition 84 can be found at

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/awqgp/index.shtml

IMPLEMENTATION OF A MOBILE IRRIGATION LABORATORY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF IRRIGATION DISTRIBUTION UNIFORMITY AND IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY TO REDUCE IRRIGATION RUNOFF FOR THE PROTECTION OF SURFACE WATER QUALITY

Project start date: January 2, 2009

Project end date: March 31, 2012

Available funds: \$660,000

Required matching funds: \$132,000

Grant Distribution:

- No more than 10% of total grant will be used by Grantee for direct project costs associated with the administration and project management of grant.
- At least 85% of total grant will be spent on the implementation of the mobile irrigation laboratory and implementation of irrigation Best Management Practices (BMPs).
- No more than 5% of total grant to be budgeted for technical and consulting services through subcontracts to provide technical assistance in designing and implementing irrigation management practices.

All costs associated with this project are incurred by the Grantee prior to being invoiced to the Regional Water Board. No Advance Payment is allowed. Only work specified in the grant agreement will be reimbursed.

SCOPE OF WORK

This program targets improving agriculture irrigation practices and reducing irrigation water runoff to protect and improve surface water quality. The program will implement a mobile irrigation laboratory and irrigation BMPs. This program would be of service to all agriculture growers in Ventura County, who farm approximately 125,000 irrigated acres.

The Grantee will provide administrative support and project management. The Grantee will cooperate and work with Regional Board staff to ensure the irrigation BMPs are implemented by growers.

The Grantee will provide a variety of services including outreach, program management (invoicing and reporting), program support and coordination with technical advisors/consultants and other parties as part of their scope of work. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be formed in cooperation with Regional Board staff. The Grantee will be required to subcontract with other partners (UC Cooperative Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, County Agricultural Commissioners, etc.) whose services may be required to implement responsibilities outlined in the Project Description.

The Grantee will manage grant funds to reimburse sub-contractors for work performed. Grant funds cannot be used for work performed prior to award and approval of the executed grant agreement.

BACKGROUND

Agriculture is a source of pollutants which contribute to many water quality impairments throughout the Los Angeles Region. Many waterbodies are listed on the 303 (d) list of impaired waters for pollutants associated with agriculture, such as nutrients, pesticides, salts, metals, and sediment. There are seven TMDLs adopted in Ventura County that identify irrigated agriculture as a nonpoint source of pollution and have assigned load allocations that must be attained by agriculture in Ventura County. The Los Angeles Regional Board adopted a Conditional Waiver for Irrigated Lands in order to implement these TMDLs by requiring mitigation of agricultural discharges and reduced pollutant loading from agriculture land. More than 80% of the 125,000 acres of irrigated agriculture land in Ventura County participate in the Conditional Waiver for Irrigated Lands program and are committed to reducing nonpoint source pollution from irrigated agriculture.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project would establish a mobile laboratory to evaluate irrigation systems and implement irrigation BMPs. The mobile laboratory will evaluate irrigation systems at the field level and provide growers with the results and selected recommendations for BMPs. Once the evaluation of the irrigation system is made the grantee would work with growers to review irrigation principals, improve distribution uniformity, improve seasonal irrigation efficiency, improve irrigation scheduling, upgrade/maintain irrigation systems, and improve overall irrigation management.

The following is a summary of services to be provided by the mobile laboratory:

- Evaluation of the runoff reduction and pollutant load reduction from optimizing irrigation practices
- Evaluation of the low water application areas in the field
- System application efficiency and design recommendations
- Irrigation scheduling assistance
- Maintenance recommendations/assistance
- Irrigation runoff/reuse recommendations

The Grantee will also perform the following services:

- Conduct public outreach and educational workshops to promote irrigation efficiency, resource conservation, decreasing erosion, tailwater reduction, and overall protection of water quality
- Establish a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Act as the responsible party for preparation and submittal of monthly/quarterly progress reports covering all grant items completed by subcontractors and eligible parties
- Coordinate with other agencies or entities to provide documentation of matching funds
- Follow up with growers after mobile irrigation laboratory evaluations to document changes/improvements in irrigation practices
- Track the implementation of irrigation BMPs as a result of mobile irrigation laboratory evaluation
- Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of management practices implemented to improve surface water quality
- Subcontract with other agencies and parties as required to complete work included in this Project Description
- Coordinate with other entities and parties, such as UC Cooperative Extension and Natural Resources Conservation Service, involved in the implementation of the irrigation management practices.

A Project Director must be designated as the main point of contact by the Grantee.

FUNDING MATCH REQUIREMENTS

The individual Recipient is required to provide a funding match of 20%. "Funding match" means funds made available by the applicant from non-State sources.

The funding match may include, but is not limited to, Federal funds, local funding, or donated and volunteer services from non-State sources. A State agency may use State funds and services for the funding match. For all programs the funding match is calculated based on total project cost for which funding is requested. State Water Board reserves the discretion to review and approve funding match expenditures.

For matching funds, additional documentation to support the amount claimed as match for each invoice must be submitted.

MINIMUM SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Public agencies and non-profit organizations interested in providing services for this grant opportunity shall submit the following information through the Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool (FAAST) located online at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov> Please see Appendix A of this document for instructions on using the FAAST system.

Submittals will be scored only upon receipt of the following minimum criteria, which are mandatory and posted at the FAAST website for Prop 84 AWQGP Applicants:

- Submitting organization
- Legal Name on file with the Secretary of State and Federal Identification Number of the agency or organization.
- An estimate of personnel time and costs (labor rates on hourly basis), materials and supplies, and operating expenses for Grantee to perform the project management, administrative support, and oversight requirements of this grant.

The additional information in the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) (Attachment A), limited to two pages, is required for a complete application and must be submitted as a Word document attachment.

- The applicant's professional experience in performing services of a similar nature with a description of professional experience and background of the agency/organization in relation to project management, cooperative work, and outreach with the agricultural community.
- A list of proposed personnel to be assigned to and involved with the project. The list should identify each person's professional experience and qualifications, as well as the description of professional experience and background of any sub-consultants that will provide technical support. The percentage of time each person will spend on the project must be estimated and stated.
- A description of any other background, training, skill, or experience relevant to the firm/organization and/or personnel assigned to the project.

- Examples of completed or on-going work that illustrate project management skills, outreach efforts, and ties to the agricultural community.

Documents must be received no later than November 18, 2008

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE

- Program Knowledge
Each Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) should clearly state the Grantee's expertise and experience in project management and implementation. Please state the Grantees understanding of the Conditional Waiver for Irrigated Lands requirements and goals for reducing pollution for irrigated agriculture sites.
- Public Outreach and Facilitation
The Grantee shall have expertise and demonstrate an understanding of conducting public outreach and the skills necessary for facilitation and cooperative agreement. The Grantee should have experience in establishing public involvement, in conducting or assisting in conducting various public meetings, and the preparation of supporting materials (newsletters, public notices, website, etc.).
- Knowledge of the Ventura County Agriculture Community
The Grantee shall demonstrate knowledge of and expertise in the environment and the relevant concerns of the agricultural community and regulatory agencies in Ventura County. The Grantee should have experience in designing and implementing irrigation BMPs.
- Availability, Schedule, and Project Management
The availability of the Grantee and its team will be an important selection factor. The SOQ must clearly identify the person that will be responsible for directing the team (Project Director) the relevant experience in such a role, the expertise that the person brings to the role, and the percentage of time that will be devoted to the grant. The SOQ must also clearly identify a Technical Director, who will be responsible for the technical implementation of the project. The experience and expertise of the Technical Director must be clearly stated and the percentage of time that person will be devoted to the grant project.

SELECTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

Selection of the Grantee will be based on the following criteria:

1. The applicant's professional past experience in project management, cooperative work, and outreach with the agricultural community, and watershed groups.
2. Quality and relevance of completed or ongoing work
3. Reliability
 - Demonstrated reliability and continuity of firm/organization's proposed staff and sub-consultants.
 - Description of workload and demonstrated ability to meet grant requirements and schedules.

The Grantee will be selected on the basis of written responses to this RFQ and an interview meeting. Submittals will be evaluated and scored based upon the stated Selection Criteria for those agencies/organizations who have complied with the minimum qualifications requirements. The information provided in the section labeled "Desirable Qualifications and Expertise" will also be used to evaluate and score each SOQ.

Three agencies/organizations with the highest scores will be selected for the "short list". These applicants will be invited for an interview and asked to make a presentation on their organization and its qualifications and experience.

Upon completion of all interviews, the agencies/organizations will be ranked in order of preference. The number one applicant will be asked to submit a detailed line item budget for the work noted in this RFQ. If acceptable, further documentation including the Project Director Certification Form, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Environmental Information Form, and the required elements of the grant agreement will be negotiated with Regional Water Board and State Water Board staff before execution and project implementation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please contact Regional Board staff Maryann Jones (213-576-6692) mjones@waterboards.ca.gov for additional information.

APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

This section provides instructions for preparing and submitting an application for the attached Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The section consists of three subsections: How to Submit, What to Submit, and Requirements for Attachments. It is important that the applicant follow the Application Instructions to ensure their application will address all of the required elements. Applicants are reminded that once the application has been submitted to the State Water Board, any privacy rights as well as other confidentiality protections afforded by law with respect to the application package will be waived. Applicants will be evaluated and scored based on the information provided in the RFQ and the expertise of the reviewers.

A. HOW TO SUBMIT

Applicants must submit a complete application on-line using the State Water Board Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST). The application can be accessed at the following secure link:

<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>

Applicants will enter information on the following three (3) application sections: General Information, Application Questionnaire, and Application Attachments. In General Information, applicants will enter a project title, project description, funding amount, and responsible Regional Water Quality Control Board. Submit the RFQ application only when the applicant has gathered and entered all required information. At the time the RFQ application is submitted, an automated confirmation e-mail will be sent to the applicant confirming the date and time of submission.

If an applicant has a question or problem with FAAST, please contact FAAST staff by phone at 1-866-434-1083, Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M., or by e-mail at faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov. If an applicant has a question as to the content or information requested in the RFQ, please see the Contact Persons included at the end of this RFQ.

The RFQ application in FAAST consists of pull down menus or text boxes that will be used to submit answers to the questions.

FAAST USER HINTS

- Applicants should use a PC. Use of a Macintosh Computer will impede your ability to save your work to FAAST.
- Applicants should use Internet Explorer, version 6.0, or above. Use of any other internet browsers will impede your ability to save your work to FAAST.
- The character limit is indicated for each text box. Text box answers can range from 500, 1000, 1500, or 2000 characters (includes spaces and characters).

B. WHAT TO SUBMIT

The RFQ application consists of a questionnaire and one attachment. The majority of the proposal content will be contained in the attachment. The remainder of the proposal content will be provided in response to questions directly entered into FAAST. FAAST tracks attachments by an **attachment title, not file name**. When uploading an attachment in FAAST the Attachment Title naming convention is as follows:

AttX_AttachmentName_#ofTotal#

Where “AttX” is the attachment letter; “AttachmentName” is the name for the attachment as specified below in the RFQ Notice; and “#ofTotal#” allows the reviewer to know how many files make up an attachment, where “#” is the number of a file and “Total#” is the total number of files submitted in the attachment. For example, Attachment A – Statement of Support is made up of 2 files, the second file in the attachment submittal would be named:

AttA_StmtSup_2of2.

The file name section in FAAST requires a computer path to the file location on the applicant's computer. While there is no specific naming convention given here for the file name, applicants should consider using a similar name to the attachment title to simplify personal file management. **Do not use special characters such as dashes, asterisks, symbols, spaces, percentage signs, etc. Underscores are acceptable, as shown above.**

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTACHMENTS

Applicants are required to submit Attachments A to complete the RFQ for the Los Angeles Region under Proposition 84 Agricultural Water Quality Grants Program. Please refer to the Minimum Submittal Requirements in the attached RFQ for discussion of the required attachments.