

SOLICITATION FOR STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR PLACEMENT ON PREQUALIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT LIST

SSOQ-DRP-0315

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The County of Los Angeles (County) is the Lead Agency for most private land use development projects within its jurisdiction, the unincorporated territory of the County, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code sections 21000 et seq. (CEQA).

The County is authorized by CEQA (Public Resources Code section 21082.1) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations section 15084) to choose from a number of arrangements to prepare environmental review documents. Among these arrangements, the applicant for a land use project seeking certain entitlements from the County may select and retain an environmental consultant to prepare the environmental review documents required by CEQA (i.e. Initial Studies, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, and Environmental Impact Reports) to be submitted to the County for independent review.

The County has an interest in ensuring that the consultants retained by applicants are professional and maintain the technical and professional expertise necessary for the production of accurate, well-organized, and clearly written environmental documents. Accurate, well-organized, and clearly written environmental documents allow for more efficient review by the County and provide better information for the public. Therefore, the County, through its Department of Regional Planning (Department), seeks to establish an official list of prequalified environmental consultants which may be retained by applicants for private land use development projects. Only consultants who are on the list may prepare environmental review documents for private land use development projects that will be considered by the County. The requirement to be on this list will not extend to sub-consultants for environmental documents or to technical experts who prepare studies such as traffic studies, noise studies, etc. for such environmental documents. Projects with pending environmental review at the time the prequalified environmental consultant list is established will be exempt from this requirement.

If the work of such prequalified consultant results in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report, then the applicant, consultant and County shall execute the three-party "Environmental Impact Report Preparation and Review Agreement" to be provided by County. The purpose of this agreement is to establish the rights and responsibilities of all the parties in relation to the preparation and review of an environmental impact report.

The County hereby issues this solicitation inviting qualified environmental consultants with significant expertise in CEQA to submit written Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) in order to be considered for placement on the County's prequalified environmental consultant list. This solicitation and all associated documents are available on the Department's website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/solicitation>. This solicitation is open continuously but subject to change. Consultants are advised to visit the Department's website frequently to check for changes and updates to this solicitation.

2.0 PURPOSE

The objective of this solicitation is to establish an official prequalified environmental consultant list for private land use development projects within unincorporated areas of the County.

3.0 SUBMISSION DEADLINE

SOQs are accepted on an open basis and will be evaluated as received. All SOQs must be submitted to the email address listed in Section 8.0.

4.0 POINT-OF-CONTACT

Questions regarding this solicitation must be in writing and may be e-mailed to:

Environmental Planning and Sustainability Section
E-mail: eps@planning.lacounty.gov

If it is discovered that a consultant contacted and received information from any County personnel, other than the person specified above, regarding this solicitation, the County, at its sole discretion, may disqualify their SOQ from further consideration.

5.0 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Consultants responding to this solicitation must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Five or more years of experience in the preparation of Environmental Impact Reports certified within the past ten years, in compliance with CEQA and State CEQA Guidelines.
- Possess successful record to legal challenges of environmental documentation
- Possess or have subcontract capability to certified or registered technical professional expertise (geology, hydrology, civil engineering, environmental health, acoustic engineering, etc.). Experience in water supply analysis for qualifying subdivision projects is preferred.
- Possess project managerial expertise in CEQA with a clear understanding of Lead Agency responsibilities and independent judgment.

- Knowledge of the County's land use plans (including, but not limited to, the General Plan, specific plans, local coastal plans, area plans, and community/neighborhood plans), regulations, policies, ordinances, and procedures.
- Possess familiarity with County departments and their statutory responsibilities.
- Experience working with federal, state, regional, and local regulatory entities.
- Possess professional level of written and oral presentation skills.
- Possess proven ability to produce documents in a timely manner.

6.0 NEW FIRM ELIGIBILITY

The County may allow a consulting firm to submit an SOQ even if the firm has not been in business for the minimum years of experience identified in this solicitation, provided the principals, partners or key staff of such firm personally meet the minimum qualifications from previous experience at other organizations. Consulting firms that seek to qualify under this provision must explicitly state so in the cover letter of the SOQ.

7.0 CONTENT AND FORMAT FOR SOQ

Interested and qualified consultants that meet the minimum qualifications, including those that have a prior relationship with the County, must submit an SOQ in order to be considered for placement on the County's prequalified environmental consultant list. All SOQs are limited to a maximum of twenty-five pages (exclusive of cover, divider sheets, organizational chart, and resumes) that must be combined into one PDF file. Any SOQ that deviates from this format may be rejected without review at the County's sole discretion.

The content and sequence of the SOQ must be as follows:

- Table of Contents
- Cover letter highlighting the consultant's qualifications and its key personnel and/or subconsultants (Section A)
- Completed Statement of Qualifications – Consultant Questionnaire (Section B)
- Supporting documentation/information including an organizational chart and resumes of key personnel (Section C)
- Digital file or website link containing one complete Environmental Impact Report document prepared by the consultant as the primary author and certified within the past ten years

8.0 SUBMISSION OF SOQ

The SOQ and any related information shall be submitted digitally and emailed to:
Environmental Planning and Sustainability
eps@planning.lacounty.gov

9.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria are considered in evaluating each SOQ submittal:

- Qualification, experience and technical competence of the consultant and its key personnel;
- Familiarity with the type of issues, sensitivities, and challenges associated with development in the unincorporated County;
- Quality assurance and ability to perform tasks efficiently and on schedule;
- Quality of written Environmental Impact Report sample; and
- Responses to Statement of Qualifications – Consultant Questionnaire.

10.0 SOQ REVIEW/SELECTION/QUALIFICATION PROCESS

County staff will review and score all properly submitted SOQs based on the evaluation criteria identified in Section 9.0. During this review process, the County shall determine if the consultant meets the minimum qualifications as listed in Section 5.0 on a “pass/fail” scoring basis. Failure of the consultant to meet the minimum qualifications will eliminate its SOQ from further consideration (see Attachment C–Evaluation Form for evaluation criteria).

11.0 TRUTH AND ACCURACY OF REPRESENTATIONS

False, misleading, incomplete, or deceptively unresponsive statements in connection with an SOQ shall be sufficient cause for rejection of the SOQ. The evaluation and determination in this area shall be at the County’s sole judgment and shall be final.

12.0 REJECTION REVIEW PROCESS

Consultants who are not accepted for placement on the prequalified environmental consultant list may request a rejection review under this solicitation by submitting a completed rejection review request form for reconsideration by the Director of the Department or designee (Director) within 15 calendar days of the written determination. If the consultant does not submit a completed rejection review request form, after a period of one year, the consultant may reapply to be placed on the prequalified environmental consultant list if it meets the minimum requirements.

A request for a rejection review may, at the County's sole discretion, be denied if the request does not satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. The person or entity requesting a rejection review is a consultant;
2. The rejection review request form is submitted timely (i.e., by the date and time specified in the written determination); and
3. The rejection review request form asserts that the County's scoring of the evaluation criteria was erroneous and provides factual support based on the information/material provided in the original SOQ.

A determination by the Director shall be final and shall be provided to the requesting consultant in writing upon completion of the rejection review. If a rejection review is denied, after a period of one year the consultant may reapply to be placed on the prequalified environmental consultant list if it meets the minimum requirements.

13.0 PUBLIC RECORDS

All information and materials submitted in response to this solicitation shall become the exclusive property of the County. All SOQs submitted in response to this solicitation become a matter of public record with the exception of those parts of each SOQ which are justifiably defined and identified by the consultant as business or trade secrets, and plainly marked as "Trade Secret," "Confidential," or "Proprietary." The County shall not, in any way, be liable or responsible for the disclosure of any such record or any parts thereof, if disclosure is required or permitted under the California Public Records Act or otherwise by law. **A blanket statement of confidentiality or the marking of each page of the SOQ as confidential shall not be deemed sufficient notice of exception. The consultant must specifically label only those provisions of their respective SOQ which are "Trade Secrets," "Confidential," or "Proprietary" in nature.**

14.0 RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The County reserves the right to reject any or all SOQs submitted in response to this solicitation, waive inconsequential disparities in a submitted SOQ, or delete and/or modify any item/requirements from this solicitation. The County makes no representation or warranty, written or oral, that it will enter into any form of agreement with any consultant responding to this solicitation for any project by the issuance of this solicitation. Consultants that are identified to be on the prequalified environmental consultant list are by no means guaranteed work from the applicants or County.

15.0 NO REIMBURSEMENT FOR COSTS

The County shall not be liable for any cost incurred by a consultant in connection with preparation and submittal of any SOQ.

16.0 REMOVAL FROM PREQUALIFIED CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT LIST

The consultant is hereby notified that the County may remove the consultant from the prequalified environmental consultant list for a period of at least two years (to be determined by the Director), if the County finds, at its sole discretion, that the consultant has done any of the following: (1) violated a term of the Environmental Impact Report Preparation and Review Agreement (described in Section 1 above); (2) made or submitted false/misleading documents and/or information to the County or any other public entity; or (3) acted in an unprofessional manner that is contrary to the American Institute of Certified Planners' Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Any consultant that wishes to be considered for relisting must submit a new SOQ after expiration of the disqualification term, and any consultant or individual that is part of a consultant team must disclose any prior affiliation with a consultant

that has been disqualified. The Director shall determine whether such affiliation justifies a continuing disqualification or can be waived for a particular individual or newly constituted firm.

17.0 ATTACHMENTS TO THE SOLICITATION

- A. Statement of Qualifications – Consultant Questionnaire
- B. Statement of Qualifications – Evaluation Form
- C. Statement of Qualifications – Rejection Review Request Form