

Salt and Nitrate Source Work Plan and Pilot Implementation Study Pre-Proposal Teleconference Meeting and RFP Questions/Requests and Responses RFP-2009-01

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Responses distributed to this list.

Summary of Questions, Requests and Responses

4/1/09

Question 1 – “The RFP states in Section 3 Work Schedule and Budget, “The budget for the Phase 1 is expected to be between \$100,000 and \$250,000...” One would presume that Phase 1 budget includes both Task 1 and Task 2. Then in Section 5.1.3 Task 2 Pilot Salt and Nutrient Studies and Report, “The preliminary budget for the Task 2 is expected to be between \$100,000 and \$200,000.” So is there a budget of between \$100,000 and \$250,000 for Task 1 and between \$100,000 and \$200,000 for Task 2? Or is the overall budget for both tasks between \$100,000 and \$250,000?”

Response 1 - In short, additional funds are being raised for the work so there is no hard budget. The Phase 1 has a projected budget of \$100-250,000. (Tasks 1 and 2) There was a chairs request for a range for the pilots and \$100-250K was suggested. The responsiveness of the proposal will not be determined by the cost, but costs must be feasibly raised by the Coalition.

4/03/09

The following questions are paraphrased from the pre-proposal meeting:

Question 2 –

Section 3 indicates a deliverable date of October 31, 2009 for the Task 2 deliverable, why is this different than the requirement in the CV-SALTS program for November?

Response 2 -

The deliverable should be approved in the November meetings and so needs to be complete to meet the November Agenda deadlines.

Question 3 -

How much review time should be planned for the final document in committee review?

Response 3 -

The consultant should plan at least one month for review of the draft, but the consultant should develop a proposed schedule including review and incorporation of changes. The Technical Committee may choose to develop a subcommittee to perform reviews given the tight deadlines.

Question 4 -

The scope recommends peer review, will the committee be the reviewers or should we budget for an outside peer review panel?

Response 5 -

The committee recommended peer review, but this concept was not completely developed by the committee. The Consultant may propose a method of cost effective peer review through the committee members and list an outside expert’s review as an optional cost in the proposal. The committee will determine acceptability in the work plan evaluation process.

Question 5 –

When should we review the MSA, is it final? And when should we provide questions and comments?

Response 5 -

The MSA should be reviewed during this proposal process. The consultant should provide an exceptions or changes they propose along with their proposal. No questions or clarifications will be provided during the proposal process, but will be negotiated with the selected consultant prior to award. The MSA will not be revised again until after the close of this RFP and negotiation and award of this work.

Question 6

The qualifications indicate regional planning as a separate qualification but there is no regional planning in the scope, is this needed?

Response 6

The scope of this RFP is part of a Regional Salinity Management Program. The consultant should be aware of regional planning processes and the methods to determine appropriate work products for the committees as the work plan is developed. Because the work plan is intended to be used on a regional basis the qualification of regional planning was relevant to the committee in the development process.

Question 7

The scope does not clearly state the database or system that should be used for data management, is there an existing Database for CV-SALTS? The scope says the database should be public; does this have to be public domain software?

Response 7

There is not a specific database for CV-SALTS work, the committee strongly recommends the consultants become familiar with the data sources and previous works listed in Attachment A of the RFP. The current database and collection efforts should be as consistent with prior work as possible and publicly available.

The Committee felt strongly that the data and software could not be “proprietary”, or specific to one consultant or group. The Consultant should interpret publicly available related to the software as available for purchase by the general public. The software need not be public domain or open source. The data aggregated or collected should be publicly available. At a minimum it must be publicly available in summary. If certain data requires a sharing agreement in order to be use by the public the consultant should state this in their proposal or prepare such agreements for Committee review during the work plan preparation.

Questions 8

To be most useful the study should likely be viewed with a long (30 year) planning horizon. Do you expect modeling of future sources and receptors?

Response 8

This scope of work is focused on gaining a comprehensive snapshot of the salt sources and receptors or sinks. The work should gather any available trend information or dependencies that can be concluded from the data collection process. However, modeling, trend analysis, forecasting and compliance issues are for future work and not included in this scope. For a view of the future efforts consultants should review Attachment B to the RFP and the Overall CV-SALTS Work Plan Outline referenced in the RFP.

Post Call Questions/Requests and Responses

04/03/09-04/06/09

Questions/Requests taken directly from the email

Question 9 – “After hearing all the firms report in, it’s apparent to us that the issue of potential conflicts is real, and the need for a truly neutral investigation team is requested by the Stakeholder Coalition. Could you tell us how important it will be for the successful firm to be neutral on the sources of salts in the Central Valley? As professional scientists, who are also neutral, we believe it to be essential to ensure the long-term trust of the coalition Stakeholders.”

Response 9 – Most entities who are qualified to do this work have worked for someone related to the process and this presents a benefit and potential conflict. Reviewers will weigh these in selection and the committee and stakeholders will watch for them in the implementation. It is important to this process not to have unknown/unrecognized conflicts. The committee, regional board, and peer reviews will be controls on conflicts during the work. We cannot expect to eliminate conflicts but ensure potential conflicts are recognized and managed, as appropriate. The team must present unbiased work that represents the science and data to gain and maintain the trust of the stakeholders and the regional board. Considerable future work is needed and requires trust be developed from the start.

Question/Request 10

“We respectfully request that CVSC consider issuing a two-week extension to the deadline date for the CV-SALTS Request for Proposal. Based on the questions and answers discussed during today’s conference call, we believe that the requested turnaround time for proposals is too short. Our rationale for this are:

1. Based on the outcome of today’s conference call, we believe that this solicitation will require approximately one month of time for consultants to develop technically sound work scopes and realistic cost estimates.
2. Without an extension of the deadline, consultants that have not been involved with the CVSC meetings when technical requirements and scope were discussed will be at a competitive disadvantage with respect to scoping and costing the proposal.
3. The Easter Holiday, Easter school recesses, and the April 15th income tax day occur in the weeks before the proposal is due; these events are problematic for timing of proposal preparation.

We believe that these rationale apply to all firms that are involved in the proposal process. We appreciate your consideration of this request.”

Response 10

CVSC understands the deadlines are a challenge and has considered the request carefully. The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has presented progress criteria that dictate the first phase of this work be completed in calendar year 2009. Delay in contracting increased the difficulty of meeting this deadline. The initial efforts are to prepare the work plan to gather the data. The challenging schedule is equally difficult for the reviewers, the Technical Committee and the Consultants.

We have provided nearly a month from RFP posting and the maximum time we available, we have already reduced the reviewer’s time significantly. From the large number of potential proposers, we have received only one request for extension. Changing the existing schedule may provide differential benefits to potential proposers and would change the review team availability.

Several consultants have attended various CV-SALTS meetings, during the development of the scope of work. These were announced public meetings open to all. All information and background has been placed into the RFP and its attachments. Other than increasing the familiarity with the purpose of the effort we do not believe there a significant advantage to firms that may have been involved in CV-SALTS as opposed to firms that have been working in salinity but not part of CV-SALTS.

Question Request 11

“Given the short timeline for the proposal process, would you consider allowing the hard copies to be delivered by 10 AM on 4/21, if the electronic version is delivered by 5 PM on 4/20? This would allow the hard copies to be sent out on a weekday and allow full time for proposal preparation.”

Response 11

Receiving the hard copy by FedEx First delivery or similar (10:00 am) would be acceptable provided that the electronic version is received by 5:00 pm on April 20th.