



REQUEST FOR BIDS

Technical Assistance for the Northern Sacramento Valley Agriculture Industry Clustering & Consolidated Goods Movement Project

Pre-Bid Teleconference: 10:00am, Friday, November 18, 2016

Deadline to Submit Bid: 5:00pm, Wednesday, November 30, 2016

OVERVIEW

Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) seeks a qualified consultant to provide technical assistance for the 'Northern Sacramento Valley Agriculture Industry Clustering & Consolidated Goods Movement Project'. The selected consultant will work with SRTA and Growing Local (a coalition of agriculture industry advocates in Shasta County and surrounding areas) to map select agriculture industry clusters located in the Northern Sacramento Valley (i.e. the counties of Shasta, Tehama, and Butte). Utilizing specified methodology, the selected consultant will then assess the role that transportation plays in the ability to compete successfully in the larger marketplace.

In addition to the consultant-led tasks, a representative from Growing Local will pursue a purchase and logistics agreement with a high-volume buyer in the Sacramento area. SRTA will model the project's effect on vehicle miles traveled and emissions modeling. Contributions from the consultant and project partners will be assembled into a final report by SRTA.

Note that this is a request for bids only – a full proposal is not required.

BACKGROUND

Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) received a Strategic Partnerships Grant from the California Department of Transportation to study the feasibility and potential benefits of a goods and freight hub located in Shasta County. The purpose of the hub is to support the aggregation, wholesale brokerage, and transport of commodities within the North State and to external markets. SRTA contracted with New Venture Advisors to develop a business case for the hub, focusing on the North State's agriculture industry. A project kick-off meeting was held with agriculture industry stakeholders and the attached technical report was produced, detailing the North State's production clusters; processing capacity; wholesale buyer and distribution networks; demand for local foods; and opportunities for collaborative industry development. After performing initial stakeholder outreach and data analysis, it was determined that a bricks-and-mortar food hub would be premature without first increasing current production levels.

For an agriculture-based hub to be financially viable in Far-Northern California, industry leaders recommend giving 'ag-of-the-middle' producers (i.e. those between \$2,000 and \$100,000 in annual production) a reason to scale-up production and a way to reduce shipping costs. A strategy was put forth by project partners (Superior California Economic Development and Growing Local) to consolidate the collection and delivery of regional products to a high-volume buyer in the Sacramento Area. This approach is viewed as an interim objective to the ultimate goal of a physical facility at the center of a more localized economy. The project scope was amended to address this strategy – the end product being a plan for connecting at least two Northern Sacramento Valley agriculture production clusters to the Sacramento Food Bank or similar well-established partner(s). Preliminary discussions with prospective buyers have occurred, but the concept needs to be investigated further.

PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED DELIVERABLE:

Secondary Research Technical Memo prepared by New Venture Advisors, available at the following location:
<http://www.srta.ca.gov/bids.aspx>

PROJECT TIMELINE:

It is anticipated that work will begin in January and take six to nine months to complete.

DIRECTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A BID:

This is a cost bid request – a full formal proposal is not required. Consultants interested in assisting SRTA in completing the enclosed scope of work are invited to submit: 1) a brief overview of your firm and technical qualifications; and 2) a cost bid, broken down by work task, not to exceed \$50,000.

Deadline to submit: 5:00pm, Wednesday, November 30, 2016.

PRE-BID TELECONFERENCE:

To ensure the same information is available to all prospective bidders, questions regarding this procurement will be limited to a pre-bid teleconference scheduled as follows:

Time/Date: 10:00am, Friday, November 18, 2016
Dial-In #: (866) 906-9888
Participant Code 8514637

If you are unable to participate in the teleconference for any reason, please submit questions in writing to dwayne@srta.ca.gov prior to the teleconference. Minutes from the meeting will be provided upon request.

SCOPE OF WORK:

TASK 1 – IDENTIFY AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY POLLINATORS

- a) Develop screening criteria for evaluating potential agriculture industry pollinators – In consultation with project partners, devise an appropriate set of criteria for screening potential agriculture industry ‘pollinators’. A pollinator is a prominent figure within a geographic cluster of interconnected businesses and institutions. Screening criteria should address level of interest, qualifications, and capacity to function as an effective agent/catalyst for coordination among surrounding producers, suppliers, high-volume buyers, processors, technical service providers, transporters, and other relevant partners.
- b) Solicit potential agriculture industry pollinators and recommend a minimum of two for further consideration – In consultation with project partners, solicit potential agriculture industry pollinators, focusing on a small number of likely prospects located in the northern Sacramento Valley (counties of Shasta, Tehama, and Butte). Based on screening criteria from Task 1a, recommend at least two pollinators to serve as subjects for the mapping of agriculture industry clusters as described in Task 2. Two candidates have been tentatively identified, but there may be other interested entities that need to be evaluated and considered.

Deliverable(s): Technical memo documenting: 1) criteria for screening agriculture industry pollinators; 2) the solicitation of prospective agriculture industry pollinators; and 3) a one-page overview for each of the agriculture industry pollinators and the respective economic cluster in which they operate.

TASK 2 – MAP CLUSTER RELATIONSHIPS AND RESOURCES

- a) Develop and administer a snowball sample survey – In consultation with project partners, develop a survey for collecting detailed information from potential partners within each of the selected agriculture industry cluster identified in Task 1. The survey sample shall be based on referrals and relationship chains emanating from the selected agriculture industry pollinators (i.e. a snowball sample). Survey content should address the nature of business relationships within the cluster, the formal or informal nature of these arrangements, and the capacity/resources available to increase or expand business activity. At least 30 completed surveys will be needed to map the cluster networks as described in Task 2b. Given the sample size and how the information will be used, surveying should be administered directly in an interview fashion, allowing for open-ended discussion.
- b) Cluster mapping – Utilizing the sum of all information and insights collected from project partners and industry stakeholders, create visual maps illustrating: 1) the organizational relationships between prospective cluster participants (i.e. the existing formal and informal coordination of activities between producers, processors, brokers, distributors, buyers, etc.) and 2) the spatial relationship between cluster resources (i.e. production areas, storage facilities, processing facilities, etc.).

Deliverable(s): Technical memo documenting: 1) the results of the snowball sample survey; 2) a map illustrating the network of relationships relevant to each economic cluster; and 3) a spatial map illustrating the physical location of resources relevant to each cluster.

TASK 3 – ASSESS THE ROLE OF TRANSPORTATION IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

- a) Evaluate delivery distance and operational scale as factors of economic competitiveness in food production within the northern Sacramento Valley (i.e. counties of Shasta, Tehama, and Butte) – Analysis should utilize Jacob Brimlow (jbrimlow@csuchico.edu) from the College of Agriculture at California State University Chico (or similarly qualified individual) and methodology developed by the University of Tennessee accessible via the following link:
<https://app.box.com/s/yant412h9kqvef12i1bsene3pahv0qmv>

Local data must be used and the methodology adapted or augmented as necessary to address the unique context and qualities of the study area, including the additional cost of delivery to the Sacramento area.

- b) Apply findings to clusters mapped in Task 2 – Analysis shall include the development and evaluation of alternative strategies for the efficient aggregation and delivery of commodities to the Sacramento area. Both current and future potential volumes shall be taken into consideration when developing recommendations.

Deliverable(s): Technical memo documenting all data, technical methodology (including adaptations or augmentations necessary for local application), findings, and the application of findings to the selected agriculture industry clusters.

TASK 4 – OPTIONAL WORK TASKS

- a) Technical assistance – Additional work may be requested via task order to supplement or supplant work being performed by SRTA and Growing Local (see below). The budget available for additional technical work task shall be the maximum project budget (\$50,000), less your cost bid for Tasks 1 through 3. Interested bidders are asked to provide an hourly fee schedule, organized by job classification.

ADDITIONAL WORK BEING PERFORMED BY SRTA AND GROWING LOCAL:

- a) Development of a purchase and logistics agreement between cluster pollinators and the Sacramento Food Bank or similar well-established partner(s) – To be facilitated and prepared by Fred Schluep of Growing Local (www.growinglocalshasta.org).
- b) Travel and emissions modeling – To be performed by SRTA in partnership with Caltrans in order to measure the project's impact on the regional roadway network and associated greenhouse gas emissions.
- c) Final report – To be prepared by SRTA. The final report will integrate all work products completed by New Venture Advisors, the new consultant, and project partners.