

# Request for Statement of Qualifications

For Completion of a Study of the Deep Aquifer Underlying the 180/400-Foot  
Aquifer Subbasin, in the Salinas Valley



**Response Submittals Due - October 8, 2021**

# **Request for Statements of Qualifications for Completing a Study of the Deep Aquifer Underlying the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin in the Salinas Valley.**

## **SECTION 1. NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS.**

The Board of Directors for the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA or "Agency") is requesting Statements of Qualifications from professional firms or qualified individuals to complete a study of the Deep Aquifers that underlie the 180/400 Foot Aquifer Subbasin in the Salinas Valley. It is expected that the qualified firm or individual will generally provide these services by completing a hydrogeological study of this critical source of groundwater in the Salinas Basin. Services provided under this request are expected to occur commencing in January 2022 and concluding as early as feasible but no later than December 2023, and project deliverables must be submitted within this work period. This project must be expediently developed and concluded in a timely manner according to the project schedule developed.

The selected firm or individual will focus on completing this study, including the following tasks:

- Describing the Geology, Hydrogeology, and Extent of the Deep Aquifers;
- Estimating a complete water budget for the Deep Aquifers;
- Addressing the Economic and Administrative Constraints on Extracting Groundwater from the Deep Aquifers;
- Providing Guidance on the Practical Aspects of Managing the Deep Aquifers; and,
- Proposing and Initiating a Deep Aquifers Monitoring Program.

## **SECTION 2. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE**

In 2017, local GSA-eligible entities formed the SVBGSA to develop and implement multiple Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP's) for the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. The SVBGSA is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) with membership comprising the County of Monterey, Water Resources Agency of the County of Monterey (Monterey County Water Resources Agency, or MCWRA), City of Salinas, City of Soledad, City of Gonzales, City of King, Castroville Community Services District, and Monterey One Water. The SVBGSA is governed by an eleven-member Board of Directors, representing public and private groundwater interests throughout the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. In addition, an Advisory Committee ensures participation by, and input to, the Board by constituencies whose interests are not directly represented on the Board. A General Manager coordinates the SVBGSA's activities.

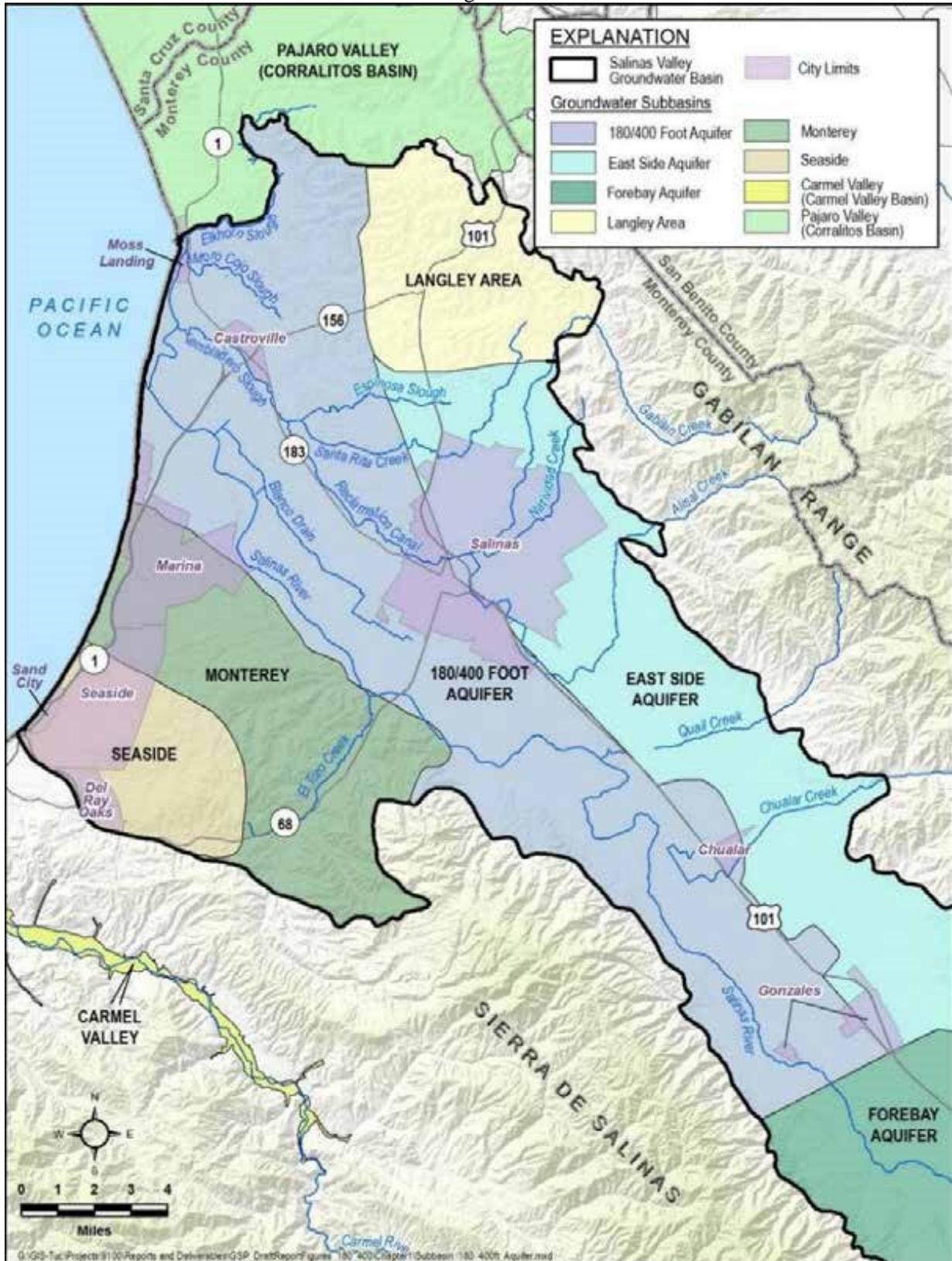
The SVBGSA is responsible for implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and planning and providing for the sustainability of six subbasins within the larger Salinas Groundwater Basin. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) identifies one of these subbasins, the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin (Subbasin 3-004.0), as critically overdrafted. The Subbasin is part of the greater Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin in the Central Coastal region of California. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) defines critically overdrafted basins as basins in which the continuation of current water management practices would probably result in significant adverse overdraft-related environmental, social, or economic impacts, and the 180/400 ft. Aquifer Subbasin has been declared in critical overdraft. The Subbasin is named for its two primary water-bearing units: the 180-Foot Aquifer and the 400-Foot Aquifer. The Deep Aquifers, the number and extent of which are unknown, reside below the 400-Foot Aquifer. The Subbasin lies in northern Monterey County and contains parts of the urban areas of Salinas, Castroville, Moss Landing, Marina, Chualar, and Gonzales (Figure 1).

This 180/400-Foot Aquifer GSP was approved by DWR on June 3, 2021. The GSP covers all the 89,700 acres of the 180/400-Foot Aquifer as shown in Figure 1. The GSP describes current groundwater conditions, develops a hydrogeologic conceptual model, establishes a water budget, outlines local sustainable management criteria, and provides projects and programs for reaching sustainability in the Subbasin by 2040.

Chapter 9. of the GSP identifies projects and management actions that will eventually lead to the sustainability of the 180/400-Foot Aquifer. Management Action 9.3.6 Priority Management Action 5, “Support and Strengthen Monterey County Restrictions on Additional Wells in the Deep Aquifers,” reads in part:

*Monterey County Ordinance 5302 temporarily restricts drilling new wells in the Deep Aquifers in portions of the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin: generally northwest of Davis Road. In the portions of the Subbasin southeast of Davis Road, it is the intent and purpose*

Figure 1



*of the ordinance to require testing to ensure new wells do not extract water from the Deep Aquifers. Exceptions are made for replacement wells, domestic wells, and municipal supply wells. This is a temporary urgency ordinance pending development of permanent regulations.*

*SVBGSA will work with Monterey County to extend this ordinance to prevent any new wells from being drilled into the Deep Aquifers until more information is known about the Deep Aquifers' sustainable yield. MCWRA plans to complete this study of the Deep Aquifers over the next three years, when funding becomes available. SVBGSA will comment on the MCWRA study of the Deep Aquifers to ensure that the study and the resulting permanent regulations will promote groundwater sustainability as defined in this GSP.*

The SVBGSA established the Seawater Intrusion Working Group (SWIG), for the purpose on working on seawater intrusion issues, and which is supported by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). This committee is comprised of hydrologists and water scientists with a significant body of experience in the Salinas Valley from work on seawater intrusion (SWI) and some work associated with characterizing the Deep Aquifer to the extent that it is currently known. The SWIG and SWIG TAC will have significant input into this study as possible connections between the Deep Aquifer and seawater intrusion are discovered and explored.

To support the development of the SWIG, the SVBGSA has compiled a library of historical documents that address SWI. These documents also include multiple references to the Deep Aquifer and are provided as a resource for responding to this RFQ. Information about the SWIG and the referenced historical documents can be reviewed on the GSA website at: <https://svbgsa.org/swig-library/>

In the 18-months since the GSP was submitted to DWR by the SVBGSA, implementation of the GSP has begun. During that time, Monterey County ordinance 5302 (referenced above) was allowed to expire. The expiration of the ordinances, coupled with data on well construction and groundwater extraction in the Deep Aquifer that occurred while the ordinances were in place, has highlighted the need to complete this critical study. To that end, the GSA has taken responsibility for conducting this study by arranging financing and issuing this RFQ to acquire the services needed to complete this action.

#### SCOPE OF WORK

The statement of qualifications should clearly describe how the responding firm or individual is qualified to address the following scope of work:

## **Phasing**

It is expected that the selected consultant will phase the approach to provide preliminary results early in the process. The selected consultant should not hold all results until the final project report. Some results, such as groundwater sampling results, results from induction, or estimates of a localized overdraft, may be released in memoranda as they become available. However, the phased development and release of information should not constrain the selected consultant's scope or focus. The selected consultant must address the entire extent of the Deep Aquifers.

## **Methodologies**

Consultants should be encouraged to provide information about methodologies they will employ to gather data and review existing studies. For example, consultants may sample existing wells to broaden the groundwater quality data set; run induction logs on wells screened in the Deep Aquifer to investigate the extent of SWI or re-analyze electric logs to refine the hydrogeologic conceptual model of the Deep Aquifers.

## **Deep Aquifer Study Activities**

The range of items that the GSA has identified could be included in the Deep Aquifers study are as follows:

### **1. Describe the Geology, Hydrogeology, and Extents of the Deep Aquifers.**

- Provide the geologic structure of the Deep Aquifers and state which geologic formations or depths should be included in the Deep Aquifers. For example, is the Santa Margarita Formation in the Toro/Highway 68 area part of the Deep Aquifers, or is it a separate area?
- Provide information on how the geologic formations that constitute the Deep Aquifers change with location.
- Describe the lateral extent of the Deep Aquifers, geologically and hydrogeologically. The geologic formations that comprise Deep Aquifers may extend well beyond the boundaries of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. This description should provide context for subsequent discussions about managing the Deep Aquifers within the larger Basin.

- Assess the extent of the Deep Aquifers in the larger Basin. The study should, at a minimum, assess the existence of the Deep Aquifers in 180/400 Foot Aquifer Subbasin, the Monterey Subbasin, the Forebay Subbasin, and the Langley Subbasin.
- Assess whether the Deep Aquifers have effective structural boundaries such as the Reliz Fault or the Ord Terrace Fault.
- Identify where the Deep Aquifers outcrop, if at all in the Salinas Valley.
- Summarize the hydrogeologic properties of the 400-Foot/Deep aquitard.
- Summarize the heterogeneity of the 400-Foot/Deep aquitard. Identify where there may be significant gaps in the aquitard, if possible.
- Identify and map locations where the 400-Foot/Deep aquitard pinches out in the Salinas Valley.

## **2. Deep Aquifers' Water Budgets**

- Estimate a complete water budget for the Deep Aquifers.
- Include in the water budget a discussion of the impact of pumping water in the Deep Aquifers.
  - Assess the extent to which pumping the Deep Aquifers draws water from overlying aquifers.
  - Assess whether and where inducing leakage in overlying aquifers promotes additional SWI in the overlying aquifers.
  - Identify specific areas where pumping the Deep Aquifers draws water from recharge zones other than the overlying aquifers.
- Quantify, to the degree data is available, any overdraft in the Deep Aquifers. If the overdraft is localized, quantify both the localized and larger Basin-wide overdraft. Describe the history of overdrafts based on existing data, if possible.
- If possible, estimate impacts of climate change on the Deep Aquifer water budget, including effects of likely sea-level rise.

## **3. Address the Economic and Administrative Constraints on Extracting Groundwater from the Deep Aquifers**

- Based on the capacities of Deep Aquifer wells, the water quality of the Deep Aquifers, and the cost of installing Deep Aquifer wells, assess what existing and likely beneficial uses exist for the

areas overlying the aquifers, and who current and future users are for the aquifers and for what uses.

- Identify existing agreements, such as between the MCWRA and Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) that may promote or limit Deep Aquifers groundwater use by some parties.

#### **4. Provide Guidance on the Practical Aspects of Managing the Deep Aquifers within the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.**

- Describe what potential management activities or extractions outside the larger Basin may occur and how they may influence the successful management of the Deep Aquifers.
- Describe the benefits and drawbacks of managing the Deep Aquifers only within the boundaries of the larger Basin.

#### **5. Propose and Initiate a Deep Aquifers Monitoring Program**

- Outline a robust monitoring program for the Deep Aquifers with a clear purpose for monitoring. The monitoring program should address uncertainty and possibly managing risk. The monitoring program should include monitoring improvements at existing wells.
- It is possible that one or more partners of the SVBGSA, or the SVBGSA, could begin implementation of the monitoring plan as soon as information becomes available.

### **SECTION 3. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION**

The firm or individual ultimately selected is expected to hold the following minimum qualifications and will be evaluated by representatives of the Agency on the following criteria:

- a. Demonstrated knowledge and recent experience designing and completing similar successful public projects within the scope.
- b. Solid track record of project delivery.
- c. Creativity in working with diverse stakeholders to arrive at unique decisions.
- d. Working knowledge and understanding of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.
- e. A clear understanding of the contents of the GSP for the 180/400 Foot Aquifer subbasin.
- f. Ability to acquire and manage services that can successfully produce the Deep Aquifers Study.
- g. Strong written and verbal communication skills.

Desirable but not required is a strong understanding of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, Monterey County Water Resource Agency projects, agricultural community, and municipal and other water interests. A selection committee comprised of SVBGSA Board Members and Agency staff will review the Statements of Qualifications submitted in response to this RFQ and may request interviews with some firms or individuals. The selection committee will rank the top firms and individuals based on Statements of Qualifications and interviews (if conducted).

#### SECTION 4. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS: RESPONSE FORMAT

Statements of Qualifications should include the following information in the indicated order and format describing the prospective consultant's availability, interests, qualifications, and recent relevant experience. The response to this RFQ will identify a qualified team or individual with substantial experience in preparing the requested deliverables.

1. Consulting firm or individual's information.
2. Cover letter indicating the RFQ due date and title, the firm or individual's name, address, telephone number, fax number, and email contact address(es).
3. Firm or individual profile.
4. Identify team members (if appropriate) and provide résumés or curriculum vitae of the team members and identify the agents and subcontractors (if any) that the firm or individual anticipates assigning in conjunction with this project. Include a discussion of the expertise of the individuals who will be assigned to the project team, along with a description of their individual roles.
5. Describe why the firm or individual is the best qualified to perform the scope of services in a timely and responsive manner.
6. A detailed list of the tasks to be performed, including a proposed schedule for performance and an analysis of each task to include the personnel assigned and the proposed methodology for completing the task.
7. A schedule showing the various tasks, the time to complete each task, and a total time frame proposed to complete the project.
8. Current billing rate schedule and the proposed total cost for the services to be completed to meet the expectations outlined in this RFQ; the billing rate will be applicable throughout the term of the agreement for the work on this project. The schedule should include the rates for all personnel who would potentially work on the project. The billing rate schedule and the proposed total cost shall be submitted in a separate sealed envelope. The envelope should be clearly marked as the price proposal, with the firm name and project name (Deep Aquifer Study). Submit only one sealed envelope with one copy of the billing rate schedule and proposed total cost.

9. Describe those conditions, constraints, or problems that are unique to the proposed scope of services that may adversely affect the project's cost or the efficient progress and completion of the project.
10. Provide at least three (3) public entity references (with contact name, address, and telephone number) for which the firm and proposed key personnel have performed (or are performing) that represents work of a similar type, scope, and complexity; and
11. Identify any legal proceedings, arbitrations, complaints, or court actions files by any person against the firm or individual within the last three (3) years for any project in which the firm or the individual participated.
12. Conflict of Interest: Provide a statement that discloses any past, ongoing, or potential conflicts of interest that the firm or individual may have due to performing work in response to this RFQ.

#### SECTION 5. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS.

A complete response to this RFQ must include ten (10) copies of a bound written submittal and electronic copies of documents containing a PDF version of the Statement of Qualifications. Statements of Qualification will be received until Noon on October 8, 2021, at the Monterey County Offices at 1441 Schilling Place, Salinas, CA 93901. Faxed responses are not acceptable and will be returned to the sender without review. The submittal deadline is absolute. Late submittals will not be considered. Statements of Qualification received after the due date and time will not be accepted or considered and returned to the sender without review. Prospective firms and individuals must select a method of delivery that ensures the Statement of Qualifications will be delivered to the correct location by the due date and time. The ten copies of bound written Statement of Qualifications and one Electronic Medium transfer device shall be submitted in one package with the words "GSA Deep Aquifer Study." The sealed and marked price proposal envelope shall be included in the package. In case of any conflict between the PDF version sent by email and the submitted bound copies, the submitted bound copies will control.

This RFQ may be downloaded from the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Web Page or provided by the SVBGSA Clerk at the address listed above. Note that failure to notify the Agency that you have downloaded an RFQ will preclude you from receiving updates or amendments, if issued. Questions regarding this RFQ may be directed to the Agency at [peterseng@svbgsa.org](mailto:peterseng@svbgsa.org).

Interested firms or individuals are required to identify any potential or perceived conflict of interest (personal and/or property interest in the subject scope of work). Pre-qualification is not required. All interested firms and individuals responding to this RFQ must comply with all applicable provisions of federal, state, and local law.

The Agency reserves the right to (1) reject any or all responses, (2) waive informalities in a response, (3) select a firm or individual who has submitted a fully responsive Statement of Qualifications and who is determined by the Agency to be a professional, qualified firm or individual, or (4) take whatever action or make whatever decision it determines to be appropriate including allowing the selected consultant to continue to completion without re-advertising the project. The Agency assumes no obligation in this general solicitation of Statements of Qualifications, and the interested firms or individuals shall bear all costs and expenses of responding to this RFQ.

If a firm or individual is selected, services will be performed pursuant to a written contract to be negotiated between the successful responder and the SVBGSA, based on the successful response and subject to mutual agreement.

#### SECTION 6. RECORDS AND FINANCIAL DATA

All correspondence with the Agency, including responses to this RFQ, will become the exclusive property of the Agency upon receipt and will become public records under the California Public Records Act. Financial data, rates for services, and cost sheets are not considered confidential or proprietary. All documents submitted in response to this RFQ will be subject to disclosure if requested by a member of the public. There are a minimal number of exceptions to this disclosure requirement. During this selection process, until a firm or an individual is selected, the Agency will not disclose submittals (or any parts thereof), except as required under applicable law. This means that, depending on the nature or timing of the request, or future court decisions, that information may not remain private or confidential and may be publically disclosed.

#### SECTION 7. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Each prospective firm or individual submitting a Statement of Qualifications in response to this RFQ agrees that the preparation of all materials for submittal to the Agency and all presentations are at the firm or individual's sole cost and expense. The Agency will not, under any circumstance, be responsible for any fees or expenses incurred by a prospective firm or individual.

In addition, each prospective firm understands and agrees that all documentation and materials submitted with a Statement of Qualifications will remain the property of the Agency and will become a public record; the Agency will assume ownership of all documents and deliverables submitted by prospective firms and individuals.

The release of this RFQ does not commit the Agency to select a firm or an individual and does not commit the Agency to enter into any agreement with a firm or an individual identified by the Agency through this process and the most qualified to provide the services described in this RFQ.

Prospective firms and individuals are responsible for making necessary investigations and examinations of records. Failure to do so will not act to relieve any condition of a potential professional services agreement or the requirements set out in this RFQ. It is mutually understood and agreed that submitting a Statement of Qualifications shall be considered evidence that the prospective firm has made such examinations and investigations. No request for modification of a Statement of Qualifications shall be considered after its submission on the grounds that the prospective firm or individual was not fully informed as to any fact or condition.

A prospective firm or individual may withdraw their submittal at any time before the date and the time which is set forth herein as the deadline or submittal of Statements of Qualifications.

The Agency reserves the right to request additional information from any prospective firms or individuals deemed necessary by the Agency to evaluate the submittals. However, this process may not be used as an opportunity to submit missing documentation or make substantive revisions to the original Statement of Qualifications.

If a prospective firm or individual has a question or requests clarification pertaining to this RFQ, such question or request for clarification must be put in writing and submitted to the Agency in the manner identified below. The Agency will provide all prospective firms or individuals who have provided their contact information with a list of all questions and requests for clarification, as well as the answers to the questions and responses to the requests for clarification.

All Statements of Qualifications will remain in effect and legally binding for at least one hundred twenty (120) days from the date of submission.

This Request for Qualifications shall be governed in accordance with the laws of the State of California, and the jurisdiction of any disputes hereunder shall be Monterey County or in the appropriate federal court with jurisdiction over the matter.

Unless otherwise directed, all communications regarding this RFQ, including all questions, should be submitted to the Agency at [peterseng@svbgsa.org](mailto:peterseng@svbgsa.org).

**SECTION 8. SCHEDULE**

The following is the tentative schedule for selection of a consultant:

September 13, 2021	RFQ Release Date
September 24, 2021	Deadline for Submittal of Questions or Requests for Clarification
October 12, 2021	RFQ Response Submittals Due to the Agency
October 13 - Nov 22, 2021	Agency Review
December 9, 2021	Consultant Selection and Board of Directors Approval
January 2022	Contract Executed and Work Period Begins