



August 1, 2016

Request for Proposals: Produce Processing Facility Feasibility Study and Business Plan

SnoValley Tilth, a nonprofit supporting sustainable agriculture in the Snoqualmie and Snohomish Valleys, is seeking a qualified consultant or team of consultants to develop a feasibility study and write a business plan for a produce processing facility in the area. The feasibility study and business plan will lay the foundation for establishing an economically viable produce processing facility in the Snoqualmie Valley. A processing facility would increase the ability for farmers to add value to their produce via methods such as freezing, canning, and dehydrating. This type of value-adding addresses three consistent struggles for farms: expand market access, extend the sales season, and increase the return on investment for farmers.

Background and general scope

The funding for this project has been awarded to SnoValley Tilth by the USDA Rural Development Program. The primary initial benefit of this work will be to narrow down the options and identify a clear path for establishing a produce processing facility that will meet the needs of the majority of farmers in the region, while meeting customer demand for locally grown *and* prepared products.

There are a variety of ways the processing facility could be structured and myriad services it could offer. A feasibility study will compare and contrast these options. A business plan will describe the steps to fund the development and sustainable operation of the facility.

To assist in achieving these objectives, consultant services are sought to deliver a feasibility study and business plan for produce processing infrastructure. The grant award allocates up to \$21,000 for the consultant's work including completing a feasibility study and writing a business plan. The consultant will participate in 2-4 community meetings to share findings from the work. SnoValley Tilth staff is funded under the grant to coordinate these meetings. All deliverables must be completed by June 30, 2017.

Specific tasks and deliverable: Feasibility Study

1. Identify case studies from other regions that could serve as replicable models for a produce processing facility in the Snoqualmie Valley and collect data from these existing processing centers that could inform facility development here.
2. Survey producers in the Snoqualmie Valley and the wider region to identify their needs, likely uses, and perceived opportunities in having a processing facility in the valley.
3. Survey nearby processing centers to identify their services, fee structures, and service areas as well as any recommendations and guidance for operations.
4. Survey retail and institutional markets for value added produce to identify local demand in terms of products, quantity, and pricing.

5. Survey of potential sites for the facility.

The feasibility study should include the following sections: (1) identification of alternative scenarios for produce aggregation and processing, (2) market feasibility of the alternative scenarios, (3) technical feasibility of the alternative scenarios (including infrastructure needs) (4) financial feasibility of the alternative scenarios (including capital requirements for facilities, equipment and inventories), and (5) recommended alternative. The findings of this report will guide the writing of the business plan.

Specific tasks and deliverable: Business Plan

The business plan will serve as the blueprint for creating and operating the recommended alternative from the feasibility study. The development of the business plan will be guided by information gathered for the feasibility study. The business plan should include the following sections: (1) overview of the proposed aggregation and processing facility, (2) marketing plan, (3) management structure, and (4) financial projections.

Submission Requirements

Responding firms shall submit the following minimum components by September 1, 2016.

1. Firm name, address, and contact information of individuals authorized to answer questions.
2. Firm Profile: Include background and ownership of the company; number of employees; location of primary and any satellite locations; number and nature of professional staff to be assigned to this project; identify supervisory and management staff and summarize experience.
3. Summary of Related Experience: Briefly summarize your experience working in the agriculture sector, and in particular, experience related to any of the following: small-scale agriculture, value added processing, and agricultural supply chains. Please also identify that which makes your firm uniquely qualified to perform the work.
4. Approach to Complete the Scope of Work: Please describe the methodology that you would take to develop the feasibility study and business plan described above.
5. Cost: Provide a standard fee schedule (hourly rate or other proposal) for services offered and a cost breakdown for completing the project tasks.
6. Subcontracting: Identification of any services that may be subcontracted, including (if known) the name of the subcontractor and applicable experience.
7. References: Provide a list, with current contact information, of references who can speak to your firm's relevant work within the past three (3) years.

Evaluation of the Responses

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated using a combination of the following criteria:

1. Experience/expertise: Previous related experience and qualifications in the subject; demonstration of an understanding of scope of project.

2. Overall methodology: overall approach to the project.
3. Resources: availability and ability to meet project deadlines.
4. Cost: cost including the overall project-task budget-distribution.
5. References: history and performance of consultant on similar projects; references and recommendations of previous clients.
6. Interview: at the discretion of the SVT, interviews may be arranged to assist in making a final selection.

Please address questions and requests for additional information to SnoValley Tilth Executive Director Melissa Borsting at melissa@snovalleytilth.org or 425-270-8469.

Proposals should be submitted to Melissa Borsting, melissa@snovalleytilth.org, by September 1.