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Request for Proposal Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing Audit Services

Overview

The California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA) and the Lake County Winegrape Commission (LCWC) entered into an agreement to carry out a pilot program for owners of small vineyards to pursue certification in Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing (CCSW).

During the pilot phase, audit fees will be covered jointly by LCWC and CSWA for Lake County pilot vineyards needing re-certifications in Years Two and Three. (Participating pilot vineyards were certified in Year One.)

Background

Lake County is located in Northern California and is part of the prestigious North Coast AVA (American Viticultural Area). The region is home to approximately 9,500 vineyard acres farmed by approximately 160 vineyard owners.

The Lake County Winegrape Commission (LCWC) is a marketing order established in 1991 to promote the region's premium winegrapes and to assist Lake County's winegrape growers through marketing, research, and education. LCWC is a state agency with oversight by CDFA and funded by a self-assessment by Lake County winegrape growers on the sale of winegrapes.

As of February 2020, approximately 100 Lake County vineyards totaling nearly 6,000 acres have achieved Certified Sustainable status. The goal for this pilot project is to assist owners of small vineyards in Lake County by cost sharing the expenses of administrative and auditing fees necessary to become Certified Sustainable.

Scope of Work

The Lake County Winegrape Commission is seeking expressions of interest and qualifications from CSWA Accredited Auditors for this pilot project.

CSWA Accredited Auditors may present proposals for auditing services for Years Two and Three of the three-year audit cycle. First-year onsite audits were conducted in 2019; Years Two and Three will require off-site desk audits.

Audits shall be carried out in general accordance with the CCSW program standards (outlined in the Certification Guidebook) and the *California Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Workbook* (available online).

Selected Auditor(s) shall conduct independent audits for participating growers (assigned by LCWC), which shall include performing the following activities:

Task 1: Pre-Audit Planning

Pre-audit planning consists of an initial review of the application, self-assessment(s)/metrics data, action plans, and supporting documents and reports available from the Sustainable Winegrowing Program (SWP) Online System. In order to assist in prioritization of criteria review and ensure an efficient audit, selected Auditor(s) will prepare an Audit Plan outlining the structure of the audit prior to the audit date. Written notification shall be sent to the Auditee as much in advance as possible, but no less than two weeks before the audit. The notification will include, at minimum, the following items:

- Auditor name
- Audit date(s), time, and schedule
- Scope of the audit and expectations of Auditee participation

Task 2: Conduct Offsite Desk Audits (Years Two and Three)

Auditor will perform an offsite desk audit to verify that prerequisites have been met, check scoring accuracy, review use of claims/logo to ensure adherence to Communications Guidelines, identify any failure to meet certification criteria, and establish a timeline for corrective actions.

A virtual opening meeting shall take place to initiate each audit and, at a minimum, shall:

- Introduce the auditor.
- Confirm the audit objectives, scope, and schedule.
- Discuss the method of reporting and process for closing findings during the audit.

The Auditor will gather information, review recordkeeping, and review observations of operations and processes described in the self-assessment and Year One audit. During the audit, the Auditor will periodically communicate the progress of the audit and any concerns to the Auditee, as appropriate. The Auditor will use the Audit Sheet Template to track these observations, reviews, and interviews.

A virtual closing meeting shall take place to present the audit findings and conclusions in such a manner that they are understood and acknowledged by the Auditee. Any diverging opinions regarding the audit findings between the Auditor and the Auditee should be discussed and, if possible, resolved. The expectation for providing corrective action follow-up should be confirmed.

Task 3: Audit Follow-up (including Corrective Action Coordination) and Audit Report Submission

An audit report and audit checklist shall be generated to document the audit findings, using the Audit Report Template provided by CSWA. Following the audit, the Auditor will determine whether the certification requirements have been met and submit the Audit Report to the Auditee within two weeks (depending on the timeframe of corrective action completion by the Auditee). Audit reports require Auditee review and signature and are due to CSWA within three weeks of the audit date. The Auditor will submit the final audit report and certification recommendations to CSWA.

Project Fee

The Auditor will perform the above scope of work for Auditees for Years Two and Three for a flat fee, which shall include all labor and expenses associated with two desk audits and audit preparation/report writing. The Auditor shall issue one invoice for each year (inclusive of all audits conducted) to LCWC upon submittal of the audit reports, with payment due within 45 days of invoice submittal.

Project Schedule and Deliverables

The Auditor will have access to the Auditee's self-assessment scores in the SWP online system and access to the entire site during the desk audit. The Auditor shall anticipate providing the draft audit report within two weeks from the audit date. The final audit reports for Years Two and Three will be provided within one week of receipt of the audit follow-up items or completion of any required corrective action.

Key Project Milestones:

- May – June 2020: Conduct Year Two desk audits, prepare audit reports
- July 1, 2020: Deadline to submit Year Two audit reports to CSWA
- May – June 2021: Conduct Year Three desk audits, prepare audit reports
- July 1, 2021: Deadline to submit Year Three audit reports to CSWA

Proposal Submission

Proposals must include:

- 1. Company Name/Auditor Name** – Identify name of company and name of specific Auditor who will be assigned to the project.
- 2. Auditor Qualifications** – Include Auditor's experience, background, certifications and credentials, and resumé or curriculum vitae.
- 3. Cost** – Provide flat fee for each desk audit to be conducted.
- 4. Client References** – Include a list of similar projects completed in the last three years and client contact information.

Proposals must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 15, 2020.

Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Proposals must be submitted in PDF format and sent as an attachment via email to Lake County Winegrape Commission President Debra Sommerfield: debras@lakecountywinegrape.org

Upon acceptance of Auditor proposal, LCWC will present a consultant agreement detailing the above scope, terms, and agreed-upon fees for signature by both parties.

Note: By issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP), LCWC is under no obligation to enter into an agreement for services with any Auditor; LCWC reserves the right to select none, one, or more than one Auditor to complete this project.

Questions

Any questions about this RFP may be directed via email to Lake County Winegrape Commission President Debra Sommerfield: debras@lakecountywinegrape.org