

A Request for Tender for consultants to prequalify for preparation of property management planning modules required by the TIDB as a pre-requisite for provision of irrigation water (the prequalification RFT) was advertised nationally in *The Australian* and *The Age* newspapers and locally on 29 August 2009.

Only prequalified consultants will be asked by the water entity to tender for preparation of FWAPs.

The purpose of the prequalification was to undertake due diligence on the qualifications, experience and organisational professionalism of prospective consultants.

To maintain accountability, the RFT advised that contracts for property management planning will be made with a single legal entity which will be the lead contractor responsible for overall project performance. Prequalification of consultants for individual modules (soil, water, biodiversity) will not be considered. However lead contractors were able to nominate venture parties to join with them in their submission for prequalification.

The prequalification RFT comprised two parts.

Part A - Contractor Information:

Lead contractor corporate information, venture party corporate information and consent (if any nominated venture parties), the tenderer's management structure, clarification of the management relationship with the lead contractor and venture parties (if any), a list of relevant project experience (covering project description, location, client and client contacts, project value and contract period, and whether venture parties had been involved), details of lead contractor managements systems (quality management, environmental management, OH&S management and risk management), details of lead contractor insurances (workers compensation, public liability, works or products insurance, professional indemnity), a list of nominated personnel proposed to be utilised in a senior, expert or management capacity either by the lead contractor or by a venture party (to include name, current position, qualifications, experience and resume in each case) and information on logistics, availability and timing (lead time, mobilisation needs, previous relevant Tasmanian experience, capacity to prepare multiple property management plans, subcontracting policy/procedures.)

Part B - Technical ability and professional capacity:

Part B comprised the project assessment criteria used to evaluate submissions from contractors seeking prequalification. The information gained from Part A was used to supplement the assessment.

The assessment criteria were:

1. Appropriate tertiary qualifications/ documented equivalent experience in the areas of water management, water use efficiency and water quality;

Appendix B *Prequalification Process for Consultants Preparing Farm Water Access Plans*

2. Appropriate tertiary qualifications/ documented equivalent experience in soil science and its relationship to agriculture;
3. Appropriate tertiary qualifications/ documented equivalent experience in the areas of flora, fauna and terrestrial ecology;
4. Proven experience including documented examples of having undertaken similar tasks;
5. Demonstrated past abilities to meet stipulated timeframes; and,
6. Project management and experience.

Tenderers were advised to supply the full CVs of all staff who will work on the project and identify the principal and key operational members. This part also invited tenderers to address the issue of project management and project experience in the form of a technical commentary on how projects will be managed to meet client requirements, time management and project scheduling, managing third party interactions (land owners, regulatory authorities, political interactions, the general public and media) and managing venture parties and sub-contractors.

Responses to the prequalification RFT were assessed by a four-person tender assessment panel comprising personnel experienced in the work of the TIDB, land management regulation and policy, natural resource management and agriculture – one member of the panel was a member of DPIPWE. Responses to the RFT were evaluated on the basis of the degree of achievement by the tenderer of each of the six criteria. A maximum score (of 10) was given if the achievement of that particular criterion is fully compliant with no risks or weaknesses. The score was reduced proportionately to the extent of non-conformities, discrepancies, errors, omissions or risks. A score of 8-9 (superior) is awarded if the criterion is achieved soundly with only minor weaknesses which are acceptable without further action. The evaluation panel awarded prequalification to only four (4) of the 10 tenderers, three of which were awarded scores of between 8-10 on all criteria.

The prequalified consultants are RM Consulting Group (RMCG), Agricultural Resource Management (ARM), Rural Development Services (RDS) and Armstrong and Ketelaar (AK Consultants). The prequalification RFT stipulated that any changes to key personnel and/or venture parties must be communicated to the TIDB. This process of disclosure will apply to future water entities.

The prequalification process will be reviewed annually by the State, a community/scientific member and the Water Entity and if indicated by that review, repeated to maintain currency. Further consultants may be prequalified in intervening periods as the opportunity arises.