SOBOBA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS & PROPOSALS

Area Market Analysis for Tribal Aquaculture Venture

Independent Southern California Market Analysis to Inform SEDC Board Review

Solicitation No.:	SEDC-AQ-2026-MKT-001
Issued By:	Soboba Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) — Section 17 Corporation, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians
Issue Date:	October 5, 2026
Proposal Due Date:	November 19, 2026 at 4:00 PM (Pacific Time)
Project Location:	Soboba Indian Reservation & Surrounding Areas, San Jacinto, CA 92581
Contact:	Michael Castello, Chairman — Soboba Economic Development Corporation
Email / Phone:	info@sobobaedc.org | (951) 487-7744 x4801
Website:	www.soboba-nsn.gov/SEDC

This document is issued for the purpose of soliciting competitive proposals for professional market analysis services. The Soboba Economic Development Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive informalities, and to accept the proposal deemed most advantageous to the Tribe. This solicitation does not commit SEDC to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of proposals.

SECTION 1 — EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.0 Background & Purpose

The Soboba Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), a Section 17 Corporation wholly owned by the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, is issuing this Request for Qualifications and Proposals (RFQ/P) to solicit professional services for an independent market analysis to inform SEDC Board review of a potential tribal aquaculture venture. This solicitation is formally issued on October 5, 2026.

1.1 Project Intent

SEDC seeks a qualified market research firm to conduct a focused Southern California market analysis as the first step in evaluating potential opportunities for a tribal aquaculture venture on or near the Soboba Indian Reservation. Potential components include a recreational fishing lake and a commercial aquaculture operation, with or without an associated fish hatchery. The analysis will focus on commercially relevant freshwater fish species, particularly native or established species, and assess market demand, potential buyers (including Soboba casino and hospitality operations), accessible market volumes, product forms, and anticipated farmgate prices. The recreational fishing assessment will examine potential participation, fee structures, and associated revenue opportunities.

The SEDC Board has determined that understanding the market picture first — demand, competitive landscape, pricing, and go-to-market channels — is essential before site criteria, water requirements, capital costs, regulatory pathways, and operating projections can be meaningfully defined. Those downstream considerations look materially different depending on which market opportunity is actually viable, and scoping subsequent work around a well-founded market read will save significant time and resources.

This RFQ/P is therefore scoped to independent market analysis only. Technical scoping, capital and operating cost estimates, site feasibility, and regulatory analysis will be procured separately — or carried out by SEDC's technical advisors — following SEDC Board review of the market analysis findings.

1.2 Solicitation Authority

This solicitation is issued under the authority of the SEDC Board of Directors. The selected firm will work in coordination with SEDC leadership and Soboba Tribal Administration staff. All work shall be conducted in a manner consistent with tribal sovereignty, applicable federal regulations, and industry best practices for market research.

SECTION 2 — BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

2.0 Overview

This section provides background on SEDC and the context for this market analysis. The selected firm is expected to conduct an independent assessment of market conditions relevant to the potential aquaculture configurations under consideration.

2.1 SEDC Strategic Context

The Soboba Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) was established in 2015 as a Section 17 Corporation to diversify the Tribe's revenue sources and ensure sustainability for the next seven generations and beyond. SEDC's current portfolio includes Roadrunner Express, DrinkRIVR, and Red Falcon Dispensary. The SEDC Board has identified aquaculture as a potential new venture aligned with the Tribe's long-term economic self-sufficiency goals. The 2024 SEDC audit confirmed a 44% increase in net position and 80% growth in operating income, providing a strong financial foundation for new strategic investments — subject to independent viability analysis.

2.2 Technical Advisory Context

SEDC has engaged aquaculture subject-matter experts to provide preliminary technical input and will continue to rely on technical advisors for species suitability, site feasibility, capital planning, and operating design. The selected market analysis firm shall provide an objective, evidence-based assessment of market opportunities and may coordinate with SEDC and its technical advisors to obtain relevant information. Any actual or potential conflicts of interest shall be disclosed to SEDC and appropriately managed.

2.3 Potential Venture Configurations

The potential aquaculture venture may include one or more of the following potential revenue-generating components, subject to market findings and subsequent technical review:

- A recreational fishing lake stocked with native or appropriate species;
- A fish hatchery for stock enhancement and/or commercial production;
- A commercial aquaculture operation producing sustainable seafood for local and regional markets;

The market analysis will evaluate potential revenue opportunities associated with commercial fish production, hatchery and stocking sales, and fee-based recreational fishing. These activities may function independently or as complementary components of a larger aquaculture venture. In addition to these potential aquaculture components, SEDC is considering an educational and cultural resource center connecting tribal heritage with modern marine science. This education center is not subject to market analyses under this solicitation.

SECTION 3 — SCOPE OF WORK & DELIVERABLES

3.0 Overview

The selected firm shall provide professional services to complete a focused Southern California Market Analysis for a potential tribal aquaculture venture on or near the Soboba Indian Reservation. This analysis will provide SEDC's Board of Directors with the market foundation necessary to focus subsequent technical, site, and regulatory work on the configuration(s) actually worth pursuing.

3.1 Market Analysis Scope

The selected firm shall coordinate with SEDC at project initiation to establish the relative priority and appropriate level of effort for each market segment. The analysis should emphasize those opportunities judged most relevant to SEDC's development objectives while providing sufficient comparative information to support subsequent feasibility decisions.

Tasks include:

- **Species-Specific Market Assessment:** Identify and evaluate commercially relevant freshwater fish species, with emphasis on native or established species, considering market demand, consumer preferences, competitive positioning, and potential recreational fishing value.
- **Market Demand and Volume:** Assess current and projected demand for candidate species and products in Southern California, including estimates of realistically accessible market volumes (e.g., pounds per week or year) by species, product form, and distribution channel. Specifically, distinguish between the total addressable market and the portion realistically accessible to Soboba.
- **Product Forms and Pricing:** Evaluate market opportunities for live, whole fresh, dressed, filleted, frozen, and other relevant product forms. Identify prevailing and expected prices at the farmgate, wholesale, distributor, and retail levels, clearly distinguishing among them.
- **Buyer Identification and Distribution Channels:** Identify potential purchasers and market outlets, including seafood wholesalers, restaurants, retailers, institutional buyers, and Soboba casino and hospitality operations. Assess purchasing requirements, preferred product forms, expected volumes, and opportunities for direct sales.
- **Tribal Market Advantages:** Assess potential competitive advantages associated with Soboba's tribal enterprise status, proximity to Southern California markets, existing casino and hospitality operations, and opportunities for direct-to-consumer and institutional sales.
- **Recreational Fishing Market Assessment:** Evaluate regional demand for fee-based recreational fishing opportunities, including competing facilities, target customer demographics, preferred fish species, visitation potential, willingness to pay, alternative fee structures, and ancillary revenue opportunities. Estimate the potential annual number of paid fishing visits and average revenue per visitor under alternative fee structures, clearly identifying the assumptions underlying these market-side estimates.
- **Hatchery and Stocking Markets:** Assess potential markets for hatchery-produced fish, including fingerlings for commercial aquaculture, stocking-size fish for recreational fisheries, and other potential purchasers. Identify market volumes, pricing, and relevant purchasing requirements.
- **Competitive Landscape and Market Risks:** Evaluate competing suppliers, substitute products, regional market trends, seasonal demand, market access barriers, and other factors affecting the commercial prospects of candidate species and recreational fishing opportunities.

- **Primary Market Research and Validation:** Conduct interviews with prospective buyers, distributors, recreational fishing operators, and other relevant market participants to validate demand, pricing, product preferences, and anticipated purchasing volumes. Clearly distinguish documented market demand from estimates and assumptions. Proposals shall identify the anticipated number and types of market participant interviews and describe the methods used to validate purchasing interest, potential volumes, and pricing.
- **Market Opportunity Assessment:** Evaluate the relative market potential of commercial fish production, recreational fishing, and hatchery-related sales, recognizing that these activities may be developed independently or as complementary components of a larger aquaculture venture. Identify promising market opportunities, potential synergies, and important market limitations based on demand, potential sales volumes, achievable pricing, competition, and market access. Present findings to inform subsequent technical and economic feasibility evaluations without making final recommendations regarding facility design, business configuration, or investment decisions.

The final report shall include a summary matrix of illustrative categories similar to this example:

Species	Product form	Buyer/channel	Potential volume	Expected price
Species A	Fresh whole	Restaurant distributor	lb/week	$/lb farmgate
Species A	Fresh fillet	Casino restaurants	lb/week	$/lb farmgate
Species B	Live	Specialty market	lb/week	$/lb farmgate
Species C	Stocking-size fish	Recreational lakes	fish/year	$/fish

The consultant should also indicate the confidence in each estimate, the supporting evidence, and whether demand has been confirmed through buyer interviews.

3.2 Scope Boundaries

The following are explicitly OUT OF SCOPE for this engagement and will be addressed separately by SEDC's technical advisors or in subsequent procurements:

- Capital cost estimates for facility development;
- 10-year operating cost or revenue projections;
- Engineering, final species selection based on biological and technical feasibility, and facility design;
- Site feasibility, environmental assessment, or regulatory pathway analysis;
- Employment impact modeling tied to specific facility design assumptions.

Where the market analysis touches on these areas (for example, order-of-magnitude revenue ranges needed to characterize a market opportunity), the selected firm shall coordinate with SEDC and clearly label any such figures as market-side framing rather than a cost or revenue projection.

3.3 Deliverables

The selected firm shall provide the following deliverables within the study period:

- Inception Report & Work Plan (due within 7 days of Notice to Proceed);
- Draft Market Analysis Report (due within 90 days of Notice to Proceed);

- Final Market Analysis Report incorporating SEDC review comments;
- A species-by-species market opportunity matrix summarizing potential buyers, product forms, estimated annual or weekly market volumes, indicative prices, market constraints, and the level of confidence associated with each estimate – i.e. the matrix should distinguish confirmed purchasing interest from estimated demand, and identify any important assumptions underlying volumes and prices.
- Executive Summary Presentation for SEDC Board (PowerPoint/PDF, due with Final Report);
- All supporting data, source references, and research materials in digital format.

SECTION 4 — TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS — MARKET ANALYSIS STANDARDS

4.0 Overview

All services under this contract must conform to applicable industry standards and best practices for market research and tribal enterprise opportunity assessment.

4.1 Market Analysis Standards

The market analysis shall employ transparent, defensible research methods appropriate to the market segments described in Section 3.1. Findings shall distinguish between primary and secondary research, documented purchasing interest and estimated demand, and observed prices and projected pricing assumptions. Quantitative estimates shall identify their sources, relevant assumptions, geographic applicability, and limitations. The methodology and supporting references shall be sufficiently documented to inform subsequent technical and economic feasibility assessments and potential federal or tribal funding applications.

4.2 Reporting Standards

All reports shall be prepared in accordance with professional consulting standards, clearly distinguishing between findings, assumptions, and limitations. Reports shall be written for a non-technical audience (SEDC Board) while maintaining analytical rigor sufficient for subsequent regulatory and financing use. All supporting datasets shall be provided in editable digital format (Excel or equivalent).

SECTION 5 — FIRM QUALIFICATIONS & MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

5.0 Overview

SEDC seeks a qualified firm or team with demonstrated expertise in market research, competitive analysis, and tribal enterprise opportunity assessment. Firms may propose as a prime contractor with subconsultants, provided the prime contractor assumes full responsibility for all deliverables.

5.1 Minimum Qualifications

- A minimum of five (5) years of experience conducting market analyses, demand studies, or competitive assessments for food production, agriculture, aquaculture, recreation, hospitality, or related industries;
- Demonstrated experience with at least one (1) completed market analysis for an aquaculture, fisheries, food enterprise, or recreation-based project;
- At least one (1) credentialed market research analyst, economist, or MBA-level analyst on the project team;
- Demonstrated familiarity with tribal enterprise development or Native American market contexts;
- Valid business license and current professional liability (E&O) insurance of not less than $1,000,000 per occurrence.

5.2 Preferred Qualifications

- Prior experience working with Native American tribes, tribal enterprises, or tribal economic development corporations;
- Familiarity with the Southern California seafood market, recreational fishing industry, and/or aquaculture supply chains;
- Experience with USDA Rural Development or SBA tribal business market feasibility programs;
- Tribal-owned or tribally affiliated firm status.

5.3 Key Personnel Requirements

Proposals must identify key personnel for the following roles:

- Project Manager — responsible for overall project coordination and SEDC communication;
- Lead Market Research Analyst — responsible for demand, competitive, and pricing analysis;
- Tribal Enterprise / Market Advisor — responsible for tribal market context and sovereign enterprise positioning.

Resumes for all key personnel must be included in the proposal.

SECTION 6 — PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

6.0 Submission Format

All proposals must be submitted in two separately sealed components, clearly labeled as follows: (1) "Qualification Package — SEDC Area Market Analysis, Solicitation No. SEDC-AQ-2026-MKT-001"; and (2) "Fee Proposal — SEDC Area Market Analysis, Solicitation No. SEDC-AQ-2026-MKT-001." Electronic submissions are accepted via email to info@sobobaedc.org with subject line: "RFQ/P Submission — SEDC-AQ-2026-MKT-001." Hard copy submissions (one original + two copies) may be delivered to: SEDC, 23333 Soboba Rd., San Jacinto, CA 92581, Attn: Michael Castello, Chairman.

6.1 Qualification Package Contents

- Cover Letter (maximum 2 pages) — signed by an authorized representative;
- Firm Profile — legal name, address, type of entity, year established, number of employees, relevant certifications;
- Statement of Qualifications — narrative description of the firm's relevant market research experience (maximum 10 pages), including at least three (3) comparable project examples with client references;
- Key Personnel Resumes — for all personnel identified in Section 5.3;
- Project Approach & Methodology — description of the firm's proposed market analysis approach (maximum 5 pages);
- Proposed Project Schedule — detailed schedule showing all major tasks and deliverables;
- Proof of Insurance — current certificate meeting the requirements of Section 5.1;
- References — minimum three (3) professional references from comparable market analysis projects completed within the last five (5) years.

6.2 Fee Proposal Contents

- Total lump-sum fee for all services described in Section 3.1, broken down by task;
- Hourly rate schedule for all key personnel classifications;
- Identification of all reimbursable expenses and proposed not-to-exceed amount;
- Any assumptions or exclusions that affect the fee.

6.3 Proposal Deadline

All proposals must be received by November 19, 2026 at 4:00 PM (Pacific Time). Late proposals will not be accepted. SEDC reserves the right to request clarifications or additional information from any proposer.

SECTION 7 — PROJECT TIMELINE & KEY MILESTONES

7.0 Procurement Schedule

This is a 45-day accelerated procurement process, commencing October 5, 2026 and concluding with proposal submissions by November 19, 2026. The market analysis itself will be conducted under a separate Notice to Proceed following contract execution.

Milestone	Target Date
RFQ/P Issued by SEDC	October 5, 2026
Pre-Proposal Informational Meeting (optional)	October 13, 2026
Written Questions Deadline	October 16, 2026
SEDC Responses to Questions Issued	October 21, 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	November 19, 2026 at 4:00 PM PT
Proposal Evaluation Period	November 20–25, 2026
Interviews / Oral Presentations (if required)	December 1–2, 2026
Notice of Intent to Award	December 5, 2026
Contract Negotiations	December 7–10, 2026
Notice to Proceed (NTP)	December 14, 2026
Inception Report & Work Plan Due	December 21, 2026 (7 days after NTP)
Draft Market Analysis Report Due	March 13, 2027 (90 days after NTP)
SEDC Review Period	March 14–20, 2027
Final Report & Board Presentation Due	April 15, 2027

All dates are targets; SEDC reserves the right to adjust the schedule as needed, with written notice to registered proposers.

SECTION 8 — EVALUATION CRITERIA & SELECTION PROCESS

8.0 Evaluation Methodology

Proposals will be evaluated by a Selection Committee comprising SEDC Board members and SEDC staff. Evaluation will be conducted in two stages: (1) review of the Qualification Package against the criteria below; and (2) review of the Fee Proposal for shortlisted firms. The Selection Committee may conduct oral interviews or request clarifications at its discretion.

8.1 Evaluation Criteria & Scoring

Proposals will be scored on a 100-point scale as follows:

Criterion	Max Points
Firm Qualifications & Relevant Market Research Experience	25
Key Personnel Qualifications	20
Project Approach & Methodology (clarity, rigor, feasibility within timeline)	25
Proposed Project Schedule	10
References & Past Performance	10
Tribal Preference / Tribal Affiliation	10
TOTAL	**100**

8.2 Tribal Preference Policy

SEDC maintains a Tribal Preference Policy that provides a scoring advantage to firms that are tribally owned, tribally affiliated, or have demonstrated meaningful experience working with Native American tribes.

8.3 Selection Process

Following evaluation, SEDC will notify the top-ranked firm(s) and initiate contract negotiations. SEDC reserves the right to: (a) reject any or all proposals; (b) waive informalities; (c) negotiate with multiple firms simultaneously; and (d) award to the firm deemed most advantageous to SEDC and the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, regardless of fee. Award is subject to SEDC Board approval.

SECTION 9 — CONTRACT TERMS, CONDITIONS & COMPLIANCE

9.0 General Terms

The selected firm will be required to execute a formal Professional Services Agreement with SEDC.

9.1 Tribal Sovereignty & Jurisdiction

SEDC is a Section 17 Corporation wholly owned by the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, a federally recognized Indian tribe. All contracts shall be subject to the laws of the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians and applicable federal law. The Soboba Tribe asserts sovereign immunity from suit, and any contract shall include appropriate dispute resolution provisions.

9.2 Insurance Requirements

- Commercial General Liability: $1,000,000 per occurrence / $2,000,000 aggregate;
- Professional Liability (E&O): $1,000,000 per occurrence;
- Workers' Compensation: as required by California law;
- Automobile Liability: $1,000,000 combined single limit.

SEDC and the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians shall be named as additional insureds on all applicable policies.

9.3 Confidentiality & Data Ownership

All data, reports, analyses, and other work products produced under this contract shall be the exclusive property of SEDC and the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians. The selected firm shall maintain strict confidentiality regarding all tribal information obtained during the course of the market analysis.

9.4 Equal Opportunity & Non-Discrimination

The selected firm shall comply with all applicable federal and tribal equal opportunity and non-discrimination requirements.

SECTION 10 — BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS & FEE STRUCTURE

10.0 Fee Proposal Requirements

Firms must provide a comprehensive, itemized fee proposal that clearly distinguishes fees by task within the market analysis scope and identifies all reimbursable expenses. The fee proposal must be submitted in a separately sealed envelope or separate email attachment, clearly labeled as specified in Section 6.0. Fee proposals will only be opened for firms that pass the initial qualification review.

10.1 Fee Structure

Task	Proposed Fee ($)
Species-specific market assessment and screening	$_____
Commercial fish market demand, pricing, and distribution	$_____
Recreational fishing market assessment	$_____
Hatchery and fish stocking market assessment	$_____
Primary market research and buyer validation	$_____
Competitive landscape, market risks, and tribal advantages	$_____
Market opportunity synthesis and final reporting	$_____
Reimbursable expenses (Not-to-Exceed)	$_____
TOTAL LUMP-SUM FEE	**$_____**

10.2 Budget Guidance

SEDC has not established a fixed budget for this market analysis. Firms are encouraged to propose fees that reflect the actual cost of delivering a high-quality, independent market read within the procurement timeline. SEDC will evaluate fee proposals in the context of overall value, not solely on the basis of lowest cost.

10.3 Payment Terms

Payment will be made on a milestone basis as follows: (1) 25% upon SEDC acceptance of the Inception Report & Work Plan; (2) 50% upon SEDC acceptance of the Draft Market Analysis Report; (3) 25% upon SEDC acceptance of the Final Market Analysis Report and Board Presentation. All invoices shall be submitted to SEDC and paid within thirty (30) days of acceptance.

SECTION 11 — CONTACT INFORMATION & SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

11.0 Primary Point of Contact

Name	Michael Castello
Title	Chairman, Soboba Economic Development Corporation
Organization	Soboba Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)
Address	23333 Soboba Rd., San Jacinto, CA 92581
Phone	(951) 487-7744 x4801
Email	info@sobobaedc.org
Website	www.soboba-nsn.gov/SEDC

11.1 Questions & Clarifications

All questions regarding this RFQ/P must be submitted in writing via email to info@sobobaedc.org with the subject line: "Questions — SEDC-AQ-2026-MKT-001." The deadline for written questions is October 16, 2026. SEDC will issue written responses to all questions received by the deadline no later than October 21, 2026. Verbal inquiries will not be addressed.

11.2 Submission Instructions

Proposals must be received by November 19, 2026, at 4:00 PM (Pacific Time). Electronic submissions: email to info@sobobaedc.org with subject line "RFQ/P Submission — SEDC-AQ-2026-MKT-001." Hard copy submissions: deliver one (1) original and two (2) copies to SEDC, 23333 Soboba Rd., San Jacinto, CA 92581, Attn: Michael Castello, Chairman. Late proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances.