



Request for Proposal (RFP)

Title: Efficiency Assessment of Certification Workflows

Issued by: CCOF Certification Services

Date Issued: January 21, 2026

Proposal Due Date: February 20, 2026

Introduction

California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) advances organic agriculture for a healthy world through organic certification, education, advocacy, and promotion. CCOF is a nonprofit governed by an elected board of certified organic producers and represents over 4,500 diverse organic operations across North America, with almost 3,000 of those operations based in California.

CCOF Certification Services (CCOF CS) is a leader in organic certification and compliance services. We are committed to delivering efficient, transparent, and customer-focused certification processes while upholding the highest levels of organic integrity and other applicable regulations.

CCOF CS employs approximately 149 staff and 30 contract inspectors, the majority of whom work remotely across diverse regions. This distributed structure enables us to serve a wide range of organic producers and handlers while maintaining operational flexibility and responsiveness.

We seek proposals from qualified consultants to conduct an efficiency assessment of our certification workflows using Lean principles. The objective is to identify inefficiencies, eliminate redundancies, address bottlenecks, and improve turnaround times ensuring compliance and high service quality are maintained. This assessment will determine the ideal flow of certification work, independent of current databases or tools, by analyzing existing workflows and focusing on process design improvement. The insights gained will help select and configure future systems to support optimized workflows. Findings from this assessment will guide the development of a subsequent RFP for technology solutions that align with these improved processes.



Project Objectives

- Evaluate current certification workflows for inefficiencies, redundancies, and bottlenecks.
- Recommend process improvements based with Lean principles and regulatory requirements.
- Identify opportunities to automate and digitally transform workflows.
- Provide actionable strategies to improve user experience by simplifying workflows and ensuring clear, concise communication with internal teams and external stakeholders.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant will be responsible for the following:

- Review existing certification workflows and work instructions, including client submission systems (inbox, myCCOF), inbox administration, initial application, inspection scheduling, inspection report submission, review assignments, inspection report review, inspector billing (working time), invoicing, export processing, and Intact input materials management.
- Evaluate client communication tools including compliance report, action item bank, automated reminder system, and crystal report systems.
- Analyze supporting systems, including the Intact database, myROC, PDF document management tools, and existing APIs with Organic Integrity Database (OID), NetSuite, and a specialized client specific API.
- Conduct virtual interviews with certification staff, inspectors, system administrators, and key stakeholders.
- Map current processes to identify areas of waste, such as delays, redundancies, and overprocessing.
- Benchmark practices against best practices in agricultural certification and regulatory compliance.
- Develop recommendations for process optimization and technology integration.
- Present findings and an implementation roadmap to leadership.
- Draft RFP for Certification Database



Deliverables

- Current State Process Maps, highlighting pain points and waste analysis.
- Gap Analysis Report, detailing inefficiencies and compliance risks.
- Future State Recommendations, using an Effort-Impact Matrix, and aligned with Lean principles.
- Implementation Roadmap, including prioritized actions and estimated timelines.
- Executive Summary Presentation for leadership and board review.
- Draft RFP for Certification Database

Timeline

- RFP Release: January 2026
- Proposal Submission Deadline: February 23, 2026
- Consultant Selection: March 2026
- Project Start: March 2026
- Project Completion: August 31, 2026

Proposal Requirements

- Company background and relevant experience in process improvement, Lean principles, compliance, and certification systems.
- Detailed approach and methodology for conducting the assessment.
- Project team qualifications and bios.
- Proposed timeline and milestones.
- Cost estimate, breakdown, and payment terms.
- References from similar projects, preferably in certification or compliance sectors.
- Conflict of Interest Statement

Evaluation Criteria

- Demonstrated experience conducting efficiency assessments using Lean principles within regulatory, certification, compliance, or similarly structured environments.



- Quality, clarity, and feasibility of the proposed methodology, including the consultant's approach to stakeholder engagement, process mapping, and synthesizing findings into actionable recommendations.
- Strength and qualifications of the project team, including relevant expertise in Lean, process design, certification systems, and/or operational improvement.
- Experience with workflow analysis and digital transformation, including the ability to evaluate technology systems, integrations, and data flows without bias toward specific tools or vendors.
- References and past performance, particularly from similar projects in certification, regulatory, agricultural, or mission-driven nonprofit environments.
- Ability to provide neutral, vendor-agnostic recommendations, with no conflicts of interest tied to technology platforms, certification tools, or future procurements.
- Understanding of USDA National Organic Program (NOP) regulations, ISO 17065 standards, or equivalent certification frameworks **preferred but not required**.
- Cost-effectiveness and value.

Budget

CCOF has allocated **\$85,000 to \$110,000** for this project. Proposed budgets should include all costs associated with completing the full scope of work, including but not limited to professional fees, project management, stakeholder interviews, travel (if applicable), facilitation, analysis, and preparation of all deliverables outlined in this Request for Proposals.

Proposers must submit a detailed cost breakdown that clearly identifies:

- Hourly or daily rates for each team member
- Estimated hours by project phase or task
- Any subcontractor or specialist costs
- Travel or incidental expenses (if relevant)
- Proposed payment schedule tied to deliverables or milestones

CCOF reserves the right to negotiate final pricing and to request clarification on any budget item. Proposals that exceed the stated budget range may be disqualified or may require justification demonstrating exceptional value.



Conflict of Interest Statement

Proposers must disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that could affect the objectivity, independence, or integrity of the efficiency assessment. A conflict of interest may exist when a proposer has financial, professional, organizational, or personal relationships that could bias, or appear to bias, their evaluation and recommendations.

Conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

- **Financial interests** in companies that develop, sell, or implement certification databases, workflow systems, or related technology solutions that could be recommended as part of this assessment or in future procurements.
- **Current or recent contracts** with CCOF, its technology vendors, or other entities whose systems or processes will be evaluated as part of this project.
- **Intent to bid** on future technology or system implementation RFPs that may be issued as a result of this assessment's findings.
- **Prior involvement in designing, configuring, or advising on CCOF's current workflows or systems**, which could limit the proposer's ability to provide impartial analysis.
- **Personal or organizational relationships** with CCOF staff, board members, or contractors that could influence project outcomes.
- **Engagements with other USDA-accredited certifiers** or regulated entities that may create competitive, confidentiality, or impartiality concerns in the context of certification workflow evaluation.

CCOF reserves the right to determine whether a disclosed relationship constitutes a conflict of interest and to disqualify proposals where impartiality may reasonably be questioned.

Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically to: April Vasquez

Email: April Vasquez, april@ccof.org

Subject Line: "RFP Submission – Efficiency Assessment of Certification Workflows"

Deadline: February 23, 2026

