



## Sonoma County Biomass Business Competition

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### Sonoma County Biomass Business Competition

#### Request for Proposal

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# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The Northern Sonoma District Air Pollution Control District is pleased to invite you to respond to a Request for Proposals for the

## **Sonoma Biomass Business Competition**

Proposals must be received no later than 11:59pm March 26th

### **A. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE**

The Northern Sonoma District Air Pollution District (NoSoCoAir) – in collaboration with Sonoma District Economic Development Board, The Napa-Sonoma Small Business Development Center, CAL FIRE, and Sonoma Clean Energy – is launching the Biomass Business Competition (The Competition) to turn wood waste produced from wildfire risk reduction strategies into an economic development opportunity. Through a District-wide collaboration of forest experts, business leaders and public officials, the Competition is looking to build a wood products industry in Sonoma by directly investing in entrepreneurs who can catalyze an untapped sector in California.

#### **1. PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION**

Sonoma District is actively under threat of wildfire and is experiencing frequent power shutoffs due to the threat of wildfire in the area. Sonoma has seen some of the State's worst wildfires since 2017. Catastrophic wildfires have heightened concern of the District's over-vegetation and fuel loading<sup>1</sup>.

While there are many highly active and accomplished foresters working on the reduction of fuel-loading in the area, the economics to sustain forest operations that include biomass waste removal requires innovation and new business ventures. NoSoCoAir established its "Healthy Forests, Clean Air Initiative" in 2018 to connect with regional partners and to support innovative solutions to forest fuels management that promote clean air quality. In 2019, the North Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District Board of Directors established an ad-hoc Biomass Reduction Committee (the Committee) with initial members consisting of Chair Hopkins, Director Bagby, District counsel and the APCO.

After considering several different project options, the committee chose to focus on how to improve the management of wood waste streams for higher value content. We initiated the Biomass Business Competition to inspire local entrepreneurs to start a wood product or bioenergy-based business within the region. The Competition is the product of over 20 diverse and experienced organizations coming together to catalyze a new industry. The Competition will reflect the immense amount of State policy support like SB 859's Wood Utilization Barriers team working under the State's Forest Management Task Force to encourage business development through proven non-merchantable woody-product solutions.

#### **2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goal of the project is to create economic incentives and markets which supports fire safe vegetation management and avoids air pollution. The goal is for the selected awardee to play a critical role in utilizing wood waste that would have otherwise been a fire threat, or open pile burned. Through this Competition, we invite all eligible applicants to develop a business plan proposal to launch a new wood product industry in the region. We encourage all considerations for launching a new venture or expanding their existing business to build a wood utilization market.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sonomacounty.com/FAQs-about-wildfires>

Objectives:

- Select a business model that develops an economically viable outlet for excess vegetation and woody biomass from forest health, fuel reduction and post-wildfire salvage projects
- Promotes economic and environmental health of the community
- Avoids air pollution by utilizing woody biomass that would otherwise be pile burned or by a catastrophic wildfire
- Commits to supporting and using sustainably procured feedstock from Sonoma County
- Provide a solution to reduce high severity wildfire risk zones within Sonoma County

### 3. AWARDS PACKAGE

The Competition will award **\$70,000** equally to two winners in start-up capital and an additional awards package offering technical services to facilitate the success of the new venture. The awards package will include:

Company	Service	Offer
<b>CASH PRIZE \$35,000 each for two winners</b> <i>Sponsors: CAL FIRE, Sonoma Clean Power, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and Sonoma Water Agency</i>		
CLERE Inc	Enviro Permitting and Legal Assistance	4 hours
SBDC	Financial Assistance	open
SBDC	Marketing Assistance	open

In order for applicants to receive the seed money and award package, applicants are required to have filed papers with the Secretary of State for business status. If applicants do not have a business status before receiving the award they will be required to submit documentation to the Secretary of State within 30 days of the award winning date.

### B. ELIGIBILITY

The Competition is open to any and all professionals, age groups and institutions who believe they can develop a successful wood product utilization model in context to the following requisites below.

*The applicant must have a business with a valid physical address within Sonoma County or procures at least 51% of its feedstock from Sonoma County to qualify.*

#### 1. LOCAL PREFERENCE REQUIREMENT

The Competition aims to promote employment and business opportunities for local residents. To that end, the Competition requires the applicant to be a local Service Provider to the extent consistent with the law and interests of the public. Note that a local "Service Provider" is defined as a business who has a valid physical address located within Sonoma District or procures a majority of its wood waste from within Sonoma County, and holds, or obtains, a valid business license if required by a city or the District

within the jurisdiction of Sonoma District, before receiving the award. If hiring sub-consultants, the District strongly encourages using local service providers.

## 2. FEEDSTOCK PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENT

The Competition aims to invest in entrepreneurs to reduce wildfire severity in Sonoma County through wood utilization. A core tenet of this goal is to use the available feedstock within Sonoma County. As one of the two conditions to qualify as an applicant for the Competition, we expect applicants to develop a procurement strategy that utilizes at least 51% of feedstock supply from within Sonoma County. If the applicant fails to do so, they must be based out of Sonoma County to participate in the Competition. Furthermore, the Competition will be awarding extra points to applicants who incorporate a certain percentage of feedstock from Sonoma. For more information on this component, please see [Appendix B: Phase One Scoring Criteria](#).

## 3. EXPERIENCE

The Competition seeks to innovate with new ideas and technologies to overcome old issues in the forest supply chain. We encourage both new start-ups and entrepreneurs to apply. Additionally, existing businesses looking to expand their operations to build a wood waste economy can also apply.

## 4. BUSINESS SIZE

For existing businesses, the applicant must have less than 500 employees in order to meet the size standards set forth by the Small Business Administration. As stated in B.1 Local Preference Requirement, a valid business license is required before receiving the award.

## C. SCHEDULE

If the following schedule changes due to unforeseen issues, a notification will be sent to all participating applicants through available communication channels. Except as provided below, changes will only be made by written amendment to this Request for Proposals, which amendment shall be issued to all parties by the Department issuing this proposal.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
February 1st, 2021	Release Request for Proposals
January 27th - February 4th, 2021	How to Write a Business Plan Zoom Workshops
March 26th, 2021	First Phase Proposals due by 11:59 PM
April 26th, 2021	Executive Committee completes Phase One reviews and informs Phase Two winners
April 26th - May 7th	How to Pitch your Business Concept Zoom Workshops

TBD	RiseUp Community Impact Grant Writing Workshop <i>(Phase 2 applicants only)</i>
June 4th, 2021	Phase two Supplemental Documents Due by 11:59 p.m.
Wednesday, June 30th, 2021	Business Pitch Competition
Monday, July 5, 2021	Announcement of winners <i>(subject to delay)</i>
Wednesday, July 7, 2021	Disbursement of awards packages <i>(subject to delay)</i>

**D. BUSINESS PLAN WORKSHOPS AND PITCH COMPETITION WORKSHOP (OPTIONAL)**

The Napa-Sonoma Small Business Development Center will be providing free workshops in support of the two phase process of this Business Competition. Both workshops are optional and will be catering their technical assistance services to a wide range of business professionals.

The first event called “How to Write a Business Plan” will launch the Sonoma County Biomass Business Competition where questions about the Competition can be answered in addition to providing an overview of business plan writing. There will be several of these workshops on business plan writing over a two week period. There will be a number of handouts and application-related materials to help potential applicants fine tune their concepts. One of these products will be an optional business plan template applicants can choose to work from.

The second series of workshops will be catered to second phase applicants, although the workshop is free and open to the public. Called “How to Pitch Your Business Concept”, this event will focus on what details a business should emphasize when appealing to a large audience for sponsorship or funding. Time and dates for this series still needs to be determined but will be held within the 2nd phase timeframe starting April 26th through June 4th, 2021.

To register for these workshops please go to the [Napa Sonoma SBDC calendar page](#) and look for the workshop you plan to attend.

**E. REBUILD NORTHBAY GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP (OPTIONAL)**

Rebuild Northbay will be hosting a grant writing workshop in conjunction with their [RiseUp Community Impact Grant](#) program for those applicants who are selected for the second phase application period. Dates and times will be decided in Spring 2021. Second phase applicants will given an opportunity at submitting competitive applications to receive funding separate from the BioBiz Competition award.

The RiseUp Community Impact Grants program was created to support the long-term rebuilding of the region as a more sustainable and resilient community. With Rebuild's primary focus being fire survivors and/or organizations serving the fire affected communities of Napa, Sonoma,

Lake, and Mendocino Counties, the program makes grants to fill identified gaps in rebuilding, wildfire prevention and preparedness, and long-term resilience.

## F. CORRECTIONS AND ADDENDA

1. If an applicant or the District discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other error in this RFP, the applicant shall immediately notify the contact person of such error in writing and request clarification or modification of the document. Modifications will be made by addenda as indicated below to all parties in receipt of this RFP.
2. If a applicant fails to notify the contact person prior to the date fixed for submission of proposals of a known error in the RFP, or an error that reasonably should have been known, the applicant shall submit a proposal at their own risk, and if the applicant is awarded a contract they shall not be entitled to additional compensation or time by reason of the error or its subsequent correction.
3. Addenda issued by the District interpreting or changing any of the items in this RFP, including all modifications thereof, shall be incorporated in the proposal.

## G. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

### 1. FORM

Applicants must submit one (1) electronic copy to [clarke@clereinc.net](mailto:clarke@clereinc.net) and entitles "SONOMA District WOOD PRODUCT BUSINESS COMPETITION".

### 2. DUE DATE

Proposals must be received no later than 11:59pm March 26th, or as revised by addendum. The proposal due date is subject to change. If the proposal due date is changed, all known recipients of the original RFP will be notified of the new date.

### 3. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

To receive consideration, proposals shall be made in accordance with the following general instructions:

- A. Proposers shall fill out Attachment A Application Cover with their application package.
- B. The Proposal shall be consistent with Attachment B Phase One Scoring Criteria and Attachment C Phase Two Scoring Criteria of this RFP.
- C. **The completed proposal shall be in PDF format.**
- D. The submission of a proposal shall be an indication that the applicant has investigated and satisfied him/herself as to the conditions to be encountered, the character, quality and scope of the work to be performed, and the requirements of the District, including all terms and conditions contained within this RFP.

### 4. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- A. Application Cover Sheet
- B. Executive Summary of Business Concept (includes financial summary)
- C. Resume(s) of applicant team
- D. Articles of Incorporation for their Business
- E. Additional proof of concept or strategy to support business concept

## H. SELECTION PROCESS

The Biomass Business Competition will employ a two phased review process. The Competition **will not** be looking for fully completed business plans, but rather, well thought through business concepts. However, the more information provided on the logistics of the business concept will help the review committee make a decision. We will provide an optional business concept template for applicants to take into consideration. We will accept fully completed Business Plans if an applicant already has one written.

A review panel will select the highest scoring and most promising applicants to proceed to the second phase of the Competition. The second phase applicants will be sent evaluation questions for the review panel to gain a better understanding of your business concept. During this point there will be two separate workshops: one on how to pitch your business hosted by Napa Sonoma SBDC and another one on grant writing hosted by Rebuild Northbay as an extension of their own [RiseUp Community Impact Fund](#). A Pitch Competition will be held on June 30th, 2020 where two applicants will be selected to receive the award winnings.

### 1. PHASE ONE

The first phase will be an initial business concept debut that will evaluate a number of aspects based on the following scoring criteria. For more detail on Phase One Scoring Criteria please see [Attachment B](#).

Phase One Scoring Criteria		Weight	Points Possible
Criteria 1	Solution/Product	30%	1-5
Criteria 2	Feasibility	20%	1-5
Criteria 3	Value and Return	15%	1-5
Criteria 4	Caliber of Team	15%	1-5
Criteria 5	Procurement Requirement <i>(1 point will be awarded for every 20% of feedstock sourced from within the County)</i>	10%	1- 5
Criteria 6	Small Business Operating in Sonoma County	10%	0 or 5
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>

For more information on how each section will be scored and what factors we will be looking to see in the first phase applicant review, please see [Attachment B Phase One Scoring Criteria](#). The first phase of the submission process will close on **March 26th, 2021 at 11:59pm** where our review committee will assess and mark which business concepts to be selected for the second phase of the Competition. The review process will take up to a month.

## 2. PHASE TWO

The second phase of the Competition will involve a supplemental questionnaire for continuing applicants. There will be general questions that we will be asking every applicant in addition to questions more specific to the business model. Applicants will limit their responses to 5 pages. The review committee will expect responses to both general and specific questions to be submitted before **June 4th, 2021 at 11:59pm**. The second phase scoring criteria will be combined with the Pitch Competition to evaluate presentation skills, mastery of economic and technical concepts and the applicant's response to questions during the pitch and supplemental questions. Once again, we are not expected for a fully formed business plan. It is our intention to provide a technical awards package for the winner of the Competition to use the services provided to bring their business concept to its final stage before implementation. However, the applicant must demonstrate that they understand their product and its role in the market well enough to be successful. Criteria two and three in Section I aim to capture an Applicant's "mastery in technical and economic concepts".

Once submitted, the review committee will assess each supplemental response and select the final candidates to proceed to the Pitch Competition hosted on **June 30th, 2021**.

The Pitch Competition will be the final stage of the Biomass Business Competition. The selection of our winning applicants at this stage will be assessed on a number of criteria surrounding presentation skills and business acumen. For more information please see Section I.

## 3. SELECTION PROCESS GUIDANCE

1. All proposals received by the specified deadline will be reviewed by the District Review Committee for content consistent with this Proposal.
2. Competition partners will not participate in the selection process when those employees have a relationship with a person or business entity submitting a proposal which would subject those employees to the prohibition of Section 87100 of the Government Code. Any person or business entity submitting a proposal who has such a relationship with a Competition partner who may be involved in the selection process shall advise the Competition Review Board of the name of the Competition partner in the proposal.
3. The District may waive informalities or minor irregularities in any proposals received, reject any and all proposals, cancel the RFP, or modify and re-issue the RFP. Failure to furnish all information requested or to follow the format requested herein may disqualify the applicant, in the sole discretion of the District Committee. False, incomplete, misleading or unresponsive statements in a proposal may also be sufficient cause for a proposal's rejection.
4. The District Committee may, during the evaluation process, request from any applicant additional information which the Committee deems necessary to determine the applicant's ability to perform the required services. If such information is requested, the applicant shall be permitted three (3) business days to submit the information requested.

5. The District Committee reserves the right to select the proposal(s) which in its sole judgment best meets the goals and objectives of the Program and to award to only one or multiple qualified submittals. The District further reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason, including, without limitation.
6. Everyone responding to this RFP will be notified of their selection or non-selection after the evaluation committee has completed the selection process.
7. The District will not be held responsible for the delivery of any cash awards or services listed in this RFP donated by Participating Partners, but will do all it can within its power to ensure that the awards package is delivered to the winner(s).

## I. BUSINESS PITCH COMPETITION

On **June 30th, 2021** the Biomass Business Competition will hold a Pitch Competition as the final event to determine our two winners. The awardees will receive both seed money and a technical awards package to further their business concepts before implementation. The Pitch Competition is a required component for all applicants and each participating applicant will be scored on their presentation skills, pitch package and their overall business acumen to successfully bring their ideas to market.

Phase Two and Business Pitch Scoring Criteria			
Criteria 1	Presentation Skills (65%)	65%	1-10
Criteria 2	Mastery of Economic Concepts (15%)	15%	1-10
Criteria 3	Mastery of Technical Concepts (15%)	15%	1-10
Criteria 4	Response to Pitch QA (15%)	5%	1-10
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>10</b>

Competition winners will be selected by combining phase one and phase two score weighted totals, amounting to 15 points.

## J. GENERAL INFORMATION

### RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. The issuance of this solicitation does not commit the District to act in any way; if insufficient responses are received, the District may not issue awards. Additionally, this solicitation does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the District. Also, the District shall not pay for costs incurred in the preparation or submission of

proposals. All costs and expenses associated with the preparation of this proposal shall be borne by the applicant.

2. The District reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or portions thereof if the District determines that it is in the best interest of the District to do so.
3. All applicants submit their proposals to the District with the understanding that the recommended selection of the review committee is final and subject only to review by the District.
4. Upon submission, all proposals shall be treated as confidential documents until the selection process is completed. Once the notice of intent to award is issued by the District, all proposals shall be deemed public record. In the event that a applicant desires to claim portions of its proposal exempt from disclosure, it is incumbent upon the applicant to clearly identify those portions with the word "Confidential" printed on the top right hand corner of each page, and to clearly identify the information claimed confidential by highlighting, underlining, or bracketing it, etc. Examples of confidential materials include trade secrets. Each page shall be clearly marked and readily separable from the proposal in order to facilitate public inspection of the non-confidential portion of the proposal. The District will consider an applicant's request for exemptions from disclosure; however, the District will make its decision based upon applicable laws. An assertion by an applicant that the entire proposal, large portions of the proposal, or a significant element of the proposal, are exempt from disclosure may be cause for rejection as non-responsive. Prices, makes and models or catalog numbers of the items offered, deliverables, and terms of payment shall be publicly available regardless of any designation to the contrary. The District will endeavor to restrict distribution of material designated as confidential to only those individuals involved in the review and analysis of the proposals. Applicants are cautioned that materials designated as confidential may nevertheless be subject to disclosure. Applicants are advised that the District does not wish to receive confidential or proprietary information and those applicants are not to supply such information except when it is absolutely necessary.
5. Applicants shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless the District its officers, agents and employees, and those entities who have donated awards, from and against any request, action or proceeding of any nature and any damages or liability of any nature, specifically including attorneys' fees awarded under the California Public Records Act (Government Code §6250 et seq.) Arising out of, concerning or in any way involving any materials or information in this proposal that Proposer has labeled as confidential, proprietary or otherwise not subject to disclosure as a public record.

#### **NON LIABILITY OF DISTRICT**

The District shall not be liable for any pre contractual expenses incurred by the applicant or selected contractor or contractors. The Proposer shall hold the District harmless and free from any and all liability, claims, or expenses whatsoever incurred by, or on behalf of, any person or organization in relation to the Proposer's response to this RFP.

#### **LOBBYING**

Any party submitting a proposal or a party representing an applicant shall not influence or attempt to influence any member of the selection committee, any member of the Board of

Supervisors, or any employee of the District of Sonoma, with regard to the acceptance of a proposal. Any party attempting to influence the RFP process through ex-parte contact may be subject to rejection of their proposal.

#### **DURATION OF PROPOSAL**

An applicant may withdraw a proposal at any time prior to the submission deadline by submitting a written notification of withdrawal signed by the applicant or his/her authorized agent. Another proposal may be submitted prior to the deadline. A proposal may not be changed after the designated deadline for submission of proposals.

#### **EXPENDITURE OF AWARD**

The award funding and use of services must be expended by July 1, 2022. A detailed accounting of the expenditures will be required through the grant agreement that must be entered into before payment of award will be made. Please note that the award money will be considered income for tax purposes.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Application Cover Sheet

Attachment B - Phase One Scoring Criteria

Attachment C - Phase Two Scoring Criteria

Attachment D - (Optional) Business Concept Executive Summary Template



# Application

## General Information

Proposed Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Team Lead Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Have you formed your business entity yet? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no Business legal status \_\_\_\_\_

*(Applicants must form a business entity in order to receive award money)*

Number of Employees currently or expected \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any employees relevant to your business proposal and **attach their resume to your application**:

Employee 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Employee 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Employee 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Business URL (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

## Project Approach

Please provide a 3-4 sentence description of your business concept

Please provide a short description on how your business concept will plan to use the award funds and award package if selected

Please upload the following to your application cover sheet. There are optional templates and worksheets for teams to consider in the attachments

- 2-5 page Executive Summary (PDF)
- Costs and Cashflow worksheet
- Qualifications and Experience (resumes)

## Feedstock

What type of feedstock does your business intend to use? (Check all that apply)

- Merchantable wood       Tan-oak       Hardwood  
 Non-merchantable biomass     Hazard trees       Softwood

How much material do you project using per year? \_\_\_\_\_

In order to qualify for this Competition, you must either live in Sonoma County **or** procure a majority of your feedstock (>51%) from within Sonoma County. Please briefly state your feedstock procurement strategy.

Please list any partnerships or subcontractors you will leverage to procure this material.

### Partners

1) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

3) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

### Subcontractors

1) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

3) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

*For any information that is missing in this application cover sheet, please be sure to include in your executive summary and other supplemental attachments upon submission to the Competition.*

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## Sonoma County Biomass Business Competition

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# Phase One Scoring Criteria

### Criteria 1: Solution/Product (weighted 30%)

Is the proposed business concept innovative? Does the concept directly utilize non-merchantable wood/biomass (biomass) as its main financial endeavor? Does the business grasp the various ways that biomass can be utilized and where to source the biomass? Does this help forest fuel reduction efforts and find an end-use for the removed biomass? Does the product help the county reduce air pollution, achieve carbon goals, or establish a long-term market for wildfire safe vegetation removal?

#### Scoring Guide:

- 0 The solution does not address wildfire safety, air pollution avoidance, and biomass utilization from forest restoration efforts.
- 1-2 The solution utilizes biomass but does not prioritize high hazard fuels/fuel reduction efforts or does not describe how the solution can partner with the greater network of professionals working in the region.
- 3-4 The solution has a general foundation to build a working business model that accomplishes high-value wood products but is not fully developed.
- 5 The solution has a solid understanding of what is needed and proposes a solution to source wood from fuel reduction projects and generate a reliable return on investment.

### Criteria 2: Feasibility (weighted 20%)

Feasibility shall take into account the technical, economic, and social factors that will be required to successfully implement the business concept. While some wood product businesses are inherently complex, applicants should be able to identify potential risk elements of their business plan and address how they plan to mitigate risk, either through partnerships, plans to leverage financing, or other assets to help accomplish the proposed business plan.

#### Scoring Guide:

- 0 The plan is not feasible; the plan concept is unclear and cannot be carried out as described.
- 1-2 The plan does not demonstrate the entire scope of what is needed to implement a successful business model.
- 3-4 The plan demonstrates a general understanding of what is required to implement a successful business model and has made some initial connections and/or determined some specific startup activities to ensure the project's success.
- 5 The plan clearly identifies the full breadth of players and pertinent issues and demonstrates that it can address them to successfully accomplish the business plan.

### Criteria 3: Value and Return (weighted 15%)

The business plan concept should articulate the potential profit from its project by utilizing supporting data such as market size, market competition, and identify the costs and the financial resources required for the proposed plan to be implemented and to be successful.

#### **Scoring Guide:**

- 0 The plan does not demonstrate adequate financial resources for implementation and/or anticipate a return on investment.
- 1-2 The plan demonstrates a temporary return on investment for a short period of time before loss of profits occur and/or it must be indefinitely funded through grants or other financial support. If this is unavoidable, the business plan should discuss the nature of the volatility and articulate how it will address this to continue operation or if the project will cease.
- 3-4 The plan demonstrates a good understanding of the costs of operation and where it can make net positive revenue, but it does not demonstrate a reliable ongoing source of revenue over an extended period of time.
- 5 The plan demonstrates that it has the resources to implement and operate the business concept, expects to make a reliable return over an extended period of time, and can reasonably project growth in human and financial capital.

### Criteria 4: Caliber of Team (weighted 15%)

Does the applicant/team demonstrate that they can effectively leverage their experience, qualifications, and expertise to start or expand business?

#### **Scoring Guide:**

- 0 The applicant/team is not defined or does not describe how they have requisite qualifications to implement the business concept plan.
- 1-2 The applicant/team demonstrates little experience in business development, product management, or offers little technical competence to oversee the business plan.
- 3-4 The applicant/team demonstrates experience in business development but is relatively new to the wood product industry and will need to introduce themselves to the sector. The applicant/team should be able to articulate what connections are necessary and how they will make the connections.
- 5 The applicant/team demonstrates that they are highly competent in business development in the wood product industry and well connected to the issues and resources surrounding Sonoma natural and working lands.

### Criteria 5 - Procurement Requirement (weighted 10%)

Does the business predominantly use biomass feedstock located in Sonoma County? The applicant must either be: (1) based out of Sonoma County or (2) have a business model that procures at least 51% feedstock from Sonoma. If the applicant does not satisfy either of these qualifications, they will be disqualified.

#### Scoring Guide:

- 0 Does NOT procure any biomass feedstock supply from Sonoma County.
- 1 Procures **20%** of feedstock from Sonoma County
- 2 Procures **40%** of feedstock from Sonoma County
- 3 Procures **60%** of feedstock from Sonoma County
- 4 Procures **80%** of feedstock from Sonoma County
- 5 Procures **100%** of feedstock from Sonoma County

### Criteria 6 –Small Business Operating in Sonoma County (weighted 10%)

The Competition awards points to businesses who are based out of Sonoma. The applicant must either be: (1) based out of Sonoma County or (2) have a business model that procures at least 51% feedstock from Sonoma. If the applicant does not satisfy either of these qualifications, they will be disqualified.

#### Scoring Guide:

- 0 The small business will NOT physically located and operating out of Sonoma County.
- 5 The small business will be physically located and operating out of Sonoma County.

### Scoring Tabulation:

Evaluation Criteria	Score (1-5)		Weight		Score	Max Possible
1 Solution / Product		x	.30	=		1.5
2 Feasibility		x	.20	=		1.0
3 Value and Return		x	.15	=		.75
4 Caliber of Team		x	.15	=		.75
5. Procurement		x	.10	=		.5
6. Based in Sonoma		x	.10	=		.5
						5

### Additional Comments:



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# Phase Two Scoring Criteria

## Criteria 1: Presentation Skills (weighted 65%)

Does the applicant effectively and clearly communicate their business concept? Does the applicant anticipate questions and address opportunities for impact? Do they confidently explain how their business can support fuel reduction products to find an end-use for the removed wood? Do they understand how their product can help the county reduce air pollution, achieve carbon goals, or establish a long-term market for wildfire safe vegetation removal?

### Scoring Guide:

- 0 The presentation and the business concept are both unclear.
- 1-3 The presentation does not effectively present the concept well or is not presented confidently. The applicant does not demonstrate the capability to implement or expand their business concept to a working business model.
- 4-6 The presentation is delivered well but the applicant's business model does not show a clear connection to supporting the Biomass Business Competition's goals and objectives.
- 7-10 The presentation is clear and the applicant's business concept demonstrates a solid understanding of what is needed to source and utilize biomass to generate a reliable return on investment.

## Criteria 2: Mastery of Economic Concepts (weighted 15%)

Does the applicant understand the basic economic concepts that are required to make their business concept succeed? Do they understand the cashflow of their business and the proper channels to continue financing their business after the BioBiz award?

### Scoring Guide:

- 0 The applicant does not demonstrate working knowledge of the economic concepts necessary to get their business concept to succeed.
- 1-3 The applicant demonstrates a limited working knowledge of the economic concepts, but has a contractor or business partner who is required for their financial success.
- 4-6 The applicant demonstrates a general understanding of the economic concepts required to execute their biomass business concept, or has a strong economic background but has not previously worked with financing biomass products.
- 7-10 The applicant clearly demonstrates a working knowledge of the economics and has the financial acumen to successfully scale their biomass business concept and to continue leveraging financial tools post-award.

### Criteria 3: Mastery of Technical Concepts (weighted 15%)

Does the applicant understand the basic technical concepts that are required to make their business concept succeed? Do they understand their process flow design of their business and do they have the skills to troubleshoot technical problems after the BioBiz award?

#### Scoring Guide:

- 0 The applicant does not demonstrate working knowledge of the technical concepts for their business concept to succeed.
- 1-3 The applicant demonstrates a limited working knowledge of the technical concepts, but has a contractor or business partner who is required for their technical success.
- 4-6 The applicant demonstrates a general understanding of the technical concepts required to execute their biomass business concept, or has a strong technical background but has not previously worked with wood product technology.
- 7-10 The applicant clearly demonstrates a working knowledge of the technical skills necessary to implement their biomass business concept and to successfully troubleshoot technical problems post-award.

### Criteria 4: Response to Pitch Q&A (weighted 5%)

Does the applicant respond competently to the first phase supplemental questions and after their presentation during the Pitch Competition?

#### Scoring Guide:

- 0 The applicant does not respond.
- 1-3 The applicant responds but does not clearly and/ or accurately address the questions posed.
- 4-6 The applicant responds and addresses the questions posed, but doesn't deliver complete answers.
- 7-10 The applicant answers the questions fully and competently.

### Scoring Tabulation:

Evaluation Criteria	Score (1-10)		Weight		Score	Max Possible
1 Presentation		x	.65	=		6.5
2 Economics		x	.15	=		1.5
3 Technical		x	.15	=		1.5
4 Q&A		x	.05	=		.5
						10

### Additional Comments:

# **Business Concept Executive Summary**

## **[Company/Project Name]**

[Tag Line - A short and attractive tagline to describe your proposition. 5 page limit.]

### **THE GRAB**

Explain the potential profit from this project and provide supporting data such as market size, market share and growth rate. Describe your revenue model and expected profit margin

### **PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY**

Describe your current & future competitors and any other external risks that the investment may be exposed to. Demonstrate knowledge of the landscape and your competitive advantage

### **SOLUTION/PRODUCT**

Describe how you plan to pull it off. Summarize your sales, marketing, development and partnership plans. Highlight milestones achieved to date and planned for future

### **POTENTIAL RETURN/REVENUE MODEL**

Describe the financial resources that you have or need to make the plan successful. Include available and projected cash, burn rate and revenue. Explain how far will the investment take you and how do you plan to continue from there

### **COMPETITION**

Describe your current & future competitors and any other external risks that the investment may be exposed to. Demonstrate knowledge of the landscape and your competitive advantage

### **EXECUTION PLAN/GOT TO MARKET STRATEGY**

Describe how you plan to pull it off. Summarize your sales, marketing, development and partnership plans. Highlight milestones achieved to date and planned for future

### **FINANCIALS**

Describe the financial resources that you have or need to make the plan successful. Include available and projected cash, burn rate and revenue. Explain how far will the investment take you and how do you plan to continue from there

### **THE TEAM/RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

Introduce your team and emphasize on what YOU bring to the table. Explain the role and responsibility of each member and any other human resources that you would need to execute the plan.