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### ANNOUNCEMENT OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Agency Name(s): Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System Regional Association (GCOOS-RA) at Texas A & M University (TAMU)

Funding Opportunity Title: FL HAB Socioeconomic Assessment

Dates: A **required** Letter of Intent (LOI) should be sent to <u>barb.kirkpatrick@gcoos.org</u> and must be received by 11:59 Eastern Time on August 15, 2019. No feedback will be given, and it will not be used for making decisions. Proposals will not be accepted if an LOI was not submitted by the due date and time.

- Full applications must be received by 11:59p.m. Eastern Time on September 13, 2019.
- Electronic submissions received after the deadline will not be considered. Paper submissions will not be accepted.
- Investigators are advised to submit full applications well in advance of the deadline as a precaution against unanticipated delay.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this document is to advise the public that the TAMU/GCOOS-RA is soliciting proposals for HAB Socioeconomic Assessment. Funding is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2019 Federal appropriations. It is anticipated that projects funded under this announcement will have a November 1, 2019 start date.

Total funding for this research: It is anticipated that 1-2 projects are expected to be funded at the level of approximately \$100,000 -\$140,000 per year per proposal. Projects are for a maximum 2 years duration.

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

#### I. Funding Opportunity Description

## A. Program Objective

### (1). Growing Problem of HAB Occurrence and Impacts

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) are caused by diverse organisms, including toxic and noxious phytoplankton, some protists, cyanobacteria, benthic algae, and macroalgae. Blooms can extend over large geographic expanses of marine and freshwater bodies, be composed of more than one harmful or toxic species and cause significant ecological and public health impacts. HABs are a recurrent and serious problem in many areas of the US and evidence suggests that the frequency, intensity, and distribution of HABs is also increasing in this country and globally, affecting many countries.

HAB impacts on public health and local/regional economies are also dramatic and increasing but are under-studied. Costs are attributable to maintenance of toxin monitoring programs; closures of shellfish beds; marine mammal stranding networks; collapse of some fisheries; mortality of fish, shellfish, turtles, birds, and mammals; disruptions in tourism; threats to public and coastal resource health; publication of watershed, health, drinking water and seafood advisories; and medical treatments (8). Despite greater public awareness and advisories of bloom events, human illnesses and, in rare cases, even fatalities continue to be reported. Additionally, fears about threats from HAB events can trigger adverse public reactions and temporary aversion to local seafood products and activities. These deleterious impacts have increased public awareness and demand for intervention to reduce or eliminate bloom impacts on coastal resources, local economies, and threats to public health, but appropriate response requires an understanding of the causes and impacts (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16).

GCOOS – RA seeks to quantify and qualify overall socioeconomic impacts created by the *Karenia brevis* HAB that occurred in 2017-18 along the southern and west coasts of Florida, including the sociological, and economic impacts. In addition to determining the effects, the project needs to outline a HAB-event impact assessment framework that is transferable to other regions around the United States and similar situations.

# B. The TAMU/GCOOS-RA HAB Socioeconomic Program priorities:

- A 2-year project beginning in FY19 that investigates any or all of the following:
  - A total economic valuation (TEV) of the impacts of HABS on the west and south Florida regions in 2017-2018.
  - A prediction tool or model that can be used to evaluate short- and long-term **economic** consequences for the region.
  - A qualitative examination of the **social** effects of the HAB event on different types of citizens (e.g., beach-users, fishermen, tourism industry, etc.), and how these relate to overall public health and/or well-being.
  - A transferable framework, including lessons learned, to inform national-scale efforts focused on quantifying the socioeconomic effects, and performing impact assessments, of HABs.

The potential findings of this (these) project(s) are significant and could have long-ranging consequences and benefits around the country. Over the past few years, Congressional offices have had considerable interest in understanding the true costs of HABs and how much communities have lost, or stand to lose, during an event, and future economic implications. The ongoing severity of HABs experienced across the United States, as well as the increasing attention, demonstrate the need to conduct this type of research. For example, within the first month of 2019, Congress passed or introduced three pieces of HAB-related legislation. Ultimately, we need to understand the social and economic impacts to communities, in order to develop the most effective strategies that meet the needs of communities in Florida and elsewhere.

• TAMU/GCOOS-RA HAB Socioeconomic Project Characteristics:

Proposals are being solicited for quantitative and qualitative projects. Proposals may include one or both types of project. It is anticipated that at least one of both types of projects will be supported.

- *Economic*: Projects will include one or both of the following:
  - On evaluation of existing economic data at a prescribed level (i.e., county versus city) with respect to confounding factors, to ascertain (a) general economic losses since the beginning of the 2017 bloom; as well as (b) economic losses by sectors deemed at particular risk, and per input-output modeling, including the tourism industry, the commercial and recreational fishing industries, restaurants, and other groups.
  - o The development of a model or models that determine potential impacts that HABs may have on the region, given consistent and varying levels of economic stability. Specifically, projects should advance our understanding of the characteristics of communities that make them vulnerable or resilient to HAB events.
  - *Qualitative*: Project will involve prescribed constituent types and assesses the past and current social impacts that the 2017-18 HAB event have caused to these individuals.

### **Outcomes:**

TAMU/GCOOS-RA expects to receive the following outcomes through this body of work: Assessment of the aggregated economic loss associated with the 2017-18 *Karenia brevis* bloom occurring along the Florida Gulf Coast.

Specific sectors to focus on, optimally - one or more of the following:

- Tourism, including hospitality and service
- Public health and related expenditures
- Monitoring and mitigation
- Fisheries –could include commercial, recreational and/or aquaculture
- Other impacted industries (such as property values)

## Examples of Non-Applicable Research Topics:

This funding opportunity is ONLY for HAB Socioeconomic studies from the *Karenia brevis* harmful algal bloom (HABs) that occurred in 2017- 18 along the southern and Gulf coasts of Florida.

Therefore, excluded from application are:

- Non-Florida/Gulf of Mexico studies
- Blue Green algal bloom or other non-Karenia brevis studies
- Studies examining *Karenia* blooms prior to 2017.

# (2) References

- 1. Anderson, D.M. 1995. ECOHAB, the Ecology and Oceanography of Harmful Algal Blooms. Woods Hole, MA: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. http://www.whoi.edu/fileserver.do?id=24158&pt=10&p=19132
- Anderson, D.M., S.B. Galloway, and J.D. Joseph. 1993. Marine Biotoxins and Harmful Algae: A National Plan. WHOI Technical Report 93-02, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, MA 44 pp. http://www.whoi.edu/fileserver.do?id=24155&pt=10&p=19132
- 3. Bauer, M. (ed.). 2006. Harmful Algal Research and Response: A Human Dimensions Strategy. National Office for Marine Biotoxins and Harmful Algal Blooms. Woods Hole, MA: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. 72 pp. http://www.whoi.edu/cms/files/HARR-HD\_18203\_23047.pdf
- 4. Boesch, D.F., Anderson, D.M., Horner, R.A., Shumway, S.E., Tester, P.A. and Whitledge, T.E. 1997. Harmful Algal Blooms in Coastal Waters: Options for Prevention, Control, and Mitigation. NOAA/COP/Decision Analysis Series No.10. Silver Spring, MD. NOAA Coastal Ocean Office, 61 pp. http://www.whoi.edu/fileserver.do?id=24161&pt=10&p=19132
- Dortch, Q., Anderson, D., Ayres, D., and Glibert, P., editors, 2008. Harmful Algal Bloom Research, Development, Demonstration and Technology Transfer: A National Workshop Report. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Woods Hole, MA. http://www.whoi.edu/fileserver.do?id=43464&pt=10&p=19132
- 6. FDA. Fish and Fishery Products Hazards and Controls Guidance Fourth Edition April 2011 (updated August 3, 2011). https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/UCM251970.pdf
- FDA, 2015. National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) Guide for the Control of Molluscan Shellfish 2015 Revision. 464 pp. (Updated March 2018). https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/federalstatefoodprograms/ucm2006754.htm
- 8. Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference. Priorities to Improve Shellfish Monitoring for Harmful Algal Bloom Toxins. Accessed June 4, 2018. http://www.issc.org/harmfulalgaebloominformation
- HARRNESS, 2005. Harmful Algal Research and Response: A National Environmental Science Strategy 2005-2015. Ramsdell, J.S., D.M. Anderson and P.M. Glibert (Eds.), Ecological Society of America, Washington DC, 96 pp. http://www.esa.org/HARRNESS/harrnessReport10032005.pdf

- 10. Hoagland, P. and S. Scatasta. 2006. The economic effects of HABs. In Ecology of Harmful Algae (E. Graneli and J. Turner, Eds), the Ecology Studies Series. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer-Verlag, pp. 391-402.
- 11. Jewett, E.B., Lopez, C.B., Dortch, Q., Etheridge, S.M., Backer, L.C., 2008. Harmful Algal Bloom Management and Response: Assessment and Plan. Interagency Working Group on Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia and Human Health of the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology. Washington, DC, 76 pp. https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/publications/handler.aspx?key=5689
- 12. Lopez, C.B., Dortch, Q., Jewett, E.B., Garrison, D. 2008. Scientific assessment of marine Harmful Algal Blooms. Interagency Working Group on Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Human Health of the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology, Washington, D.C., 62 pp. http://www.whoi.edu/fileserver.do?id=233744&pt=10&p=19132
- 13. Lopez, C.B., Jewett, E.B., Dortch, Q., Walton, B.T., Hudnell, H.K. 2008. Scientific Assessment of Freshwater Harmful Algal Blooms. Interagency Working Group on Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Human Health of the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology, Washington, D.C., 65 pp. http://www.whoi.edu/fileserver.do?id=41023&pt=10&p=19132
- 14. National Assessment of Harmful Algal Blooms in U.S. Waters. 2000. National Science and Technology Council Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources, 47pp. http://www.coastalscience.noaa.gov/publications/handler.aspx?key=172
- 15. National Science and Technology Council, Subcommittee on Ocean Sciences and Technology, 2016. Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Comprehensive Research and Action Plan: An Interagency Report. Washington, DC. 94 pp. http://www.whoi.edu/fileserver.do?id=230904&pt=10&p=19132
- 16. NOAA National Sea Grant College Program. 2001. Prevention, Control, and Mitigation of Harmful Algal Blooms: A Research Plan. 28pp. http://www.whoi.edu/fileserver.do?id=24160&pt=10&p=19132
- 17. NOAA A Strategic Vision for NOAA's Ecological Forecasting Roadmap 2015- 2019. 14 pp. https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/ecoforecasting/noaa-ecoforecasting-roadmap.pdf
- NOAA Fisheries Marine Aquaculture Strategic Plan FY 2016-2020. 33pp. 2016. https://www.afdf.org/wp-content/uploads/8h-NOAA-Marine-Aquaculture-Strategic-Plan-FY-2016-2020.pdf

19. U.S. Department of Commerce, 2018–2022 Strategic Plan: Helping the American Economy Grow Washington, DC. 36 pp.

https://www.commerce.gov/sites/commerce.gov/files/us\_department\_of\_commerce\_2018-2022\_strategic\_plan.pdf

# C. Program Authority

33 U.S.C. §§ 4001-4009, The Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (HABHRCA), as amended; Public Law 102-567, § 201(c), Coastal Ocean Program.

# II. Award Information

# A. Funding Availability

• Funding is contingent upon availability of Federal appropriations.

It is anticipated that up to approximately \$280,000 may be available in Fiscal Year 2019 for the first year for all GCOOS - RA projects. At that funding level, an anticipated 1 to 2 projects, 2 years in duration, are expected to be funded. Specific guidelines for approximate budget requests include \$100,000-\$140,000/yr per projects.

# B. Project/Award Period

• Full proposals may cover a project/award period of 2 years.

During the implementation phase of research projects funded under this announcement, the TAMU/GCOOS-RA Program Manager will analyze financial statements and progress reports for each continuing award, and will have dialogue with the Principal Investigators and Authorized Representatives of the recipient institutions to discuss research progress and expected time lines for the remaining award period.

Regardless of the budget for any given fiscal year, the TAMU/GCOOS-RA Program Manager will consider the length of time remaining for each project, the amount of funds available, the tasks to be completed in the upcoming fiscal year, the pace of research, and any delayed progress relative to that originally proposed, before determining the funding amount in any given fiscal year.

# C. Type of Funding Instrument

In an effort to maximize the use of limited resources, applications from non-Federal, non-NOAA Federal and NOAA Federal applicants will be evaluated in the same competition, with different funding instruments applicable to the type of applicant.

The funding instrument for a research application selected for funding from a non-Federal researcher is expected to be a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is appropriate when substantial Federal government involvement is anticipated. This means that the recipient can expect substantial agency collaboration, participation, or intervention in project performance. Substantial involvement exists when: responsibility for the management, control, direction, or performance of the project is shared by the assisting agency and the recipient; or the assisting agency has the right to intervene (including interruption or modification) in the conduct or performance of project activities. "Substantial" will be coordinated and communicated by TAMU/GCOOS-RA Program Manager, and can include collaboration and participation by GCOOS and NOAA (including NCCOS) researchers, as well as GCOOS Program Manager involvement in Principal Investigator (PI) meetings, setting up management advisory groups, development of management transition plans, and communication of project results.

If the non-Federal applicant is at an institution that has a NOAA Cooperative Institute (CI), it is allowed to submit applications that reference the CI by attaching a cover letter to the application stating its desire to have the application associated with the CI. This letter should specify the name of the cooperative institute, the CI cooperative agreement number, and the NOAA-approved research theme and task that applies to the proposal. The application will use the Facilities & Administrative (F&A, or indirect cost) rate associated with the main CI agreement. If the application is selected for funding, TAMU/GCOOS-RA will notify the university that a separate award will be issued with its own award number. However, the award will include two Special Award Conditions (SACs): (1) the existing University/NOAA Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) would be incorporated by reference into the terms of the competitive award, and (2) any performance report(s) for the competitive project must follow the timetable of the funding program and be submitted directly to the funding program.

Report(s) will be copied to the CI's administrator when due, to be attached to the main cooperative agreement progress report as an appendix. This will allow the CI to coordinate all the projects submitted through the CI, since the terms of these awards will specify that this is a CI project via the MOA.

# III. Eligibility Information

# A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for Federal financial assistance in this competition are institutions of higher education, other non-profits, state, local, Indian Tribal Governments, U.S. Territories, and for-profit organizations. A Federal employee may be a collaborator on a research proposal but may **not** be the project lead. TAMU/GCOOS-RA supports cultural and gender diversity and encourages women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications to the program.

In addition, TAMU/GCOOS-RA is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. TAMU/GCOOS-RA encourages applications involving any of the above institutions to apply.

#### Please note that:

- 1) Principal Investigators should be employees of an eligible entity listed above; and applications should be submitted through that entity. Non-Federal researchers should comply with their institutional requirements for application submission.
- 2) Foreign researchers must apply as subawards or contracts through an eligible US entity.

# B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

None

# C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

- Letters of intent (LOI) are required. A full proposal that did not submit a LOI will not be considered and will be returned to the proposer without review
- Each application must substantially comply with the fifteen elements listed under Content and Form of Application, Required Elements, (1) (16), or it will be returned to sender without further consideration. A checklist with the required and requested application elements can be found in Section VIII.

## IV. Application and Submission Information

### A. Content and Form of Application:

Letter of Intent (LOI). Any full proposal received without a prior timely LOI will **NOT** be considered. The LOI should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the TAMU/GCOOS - RA Program. The LOI should be no more than one page (front only) in length, single spaced in 12-point font with 1-inch margins and should include in order the components listed below. If all these components are not included, the LOI will not be considered.

- (a) Tentative project title.
- (b) Name(s) phone number(s), email address(s) and institution of all Principal Investigator (s) and specification of which individual is the Lead Principal Investigator.
- (c) Approximate cost of the project.
- (d) Statement of the problem.
- (e) Brief summary of work to be completed and methodology to be used.

# 2. Full Application Example Application

# Required Elements:

Collaborative Proposals - If more than one institution is collaborating in a project awarded funds, the lead institution may be required to directly receive funds from TAMU/GCOOS-RA unless doing so poses a barrier to achieving proposal goals. If there is one lead institution, collaborating institutions expected to receive funds must be budgeted as subawards or contracts. Unfunded collaborators may also participate.

Each application must substantially comply with the following fifteen elements to be forwarded for merit review. The Summary, Title page, Abstract, Project Description, References, Biographical Sketch, and Budget Narrative must be single spaced in 12-point font with 1- inch margins. The Collaborators List must be an Excel spreadsheet. The fifteen elements are as follows:

- 1) Title page with appropriate institutional signatures Summary title page.
- 2) One-page maximum. The Summary title page identifies the project's title and the Principal Investigator's (PI) name and affiliation, complete address, phone and email information. The requested funding amounts for each fiscal year should be included on the Summary title page.
- 3) One-page abstract/project summary. The summary (abstract) should appear on a separate single page, headed with the proposal title, institution(s), investigator(s), total proposed cost and budget period. It should be written in the third person. The summary is used to help compare proposals quickly and allows the respondents to summarize their key points in their own words. Project summaries of applications that receive funding may be posted on program-related websites. The project summary should include an introduction of the problem, rationale, scientific objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work to be completed.
- 4) Project Description. The description of the proposed project must include narratives of the Proposed Research (elements a through d), the Application to Management (element e), and the Data Management Plan (element f). The description of the proposed project must not be more than 10 pages for elements (a) through (e) and an additional 2 pages for the Data Management Plan (f).

The Proposed Research Narrative should be thorough and explicitly indicate its relevance to the program goals and scientific priorities by:

- Identifying the topic that is being addressed by the proposal;
- Describing the proposed scientific objectives and research activities in relation to the present state of knowledge in the field and in relation to previous and current work by the proposing principal investigator(s).
- Discussing how the proposed project lends value to the program goals;

- Identifying the function of each PI. The Lead PI (s) will be responsible for communicating with the TAMU/GCOOS-RA Manager on all pertinent verbal or written information.
- Discussing the expected significance of the project. Outputs are defined as products (e.g. publications, models) or activities that lead to outcomes. The timeline for achieving outcomes should be included in the Milestone Chart (below).
- Providing a detailed Data Management Plan that describes how metadata and data collected as part of the project will be disseminated to the broader community, and plans for longer term archiving of these data. A Poi is an acceptable archive repository.
- 5) References cited. Reference information is required. Each reference should include the names of all authors in the same sequence they appear in the publications, the article title, the journal or book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publications. While there is no established page limitation, this section should include bibliographic citations only and should not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the Project Description.
- 6) Milestone chart. Provide time lines of major tasks covering the duration of the proposed project.
- 7) Biographical sketch. All principal and co-investigators must provide summaries of up to 2 pages that include the following:
  - A listing of professional and academic credentials and mailing address;
  - A list of up to five publications most closely related to the proposed project and five other significant publications.
- 8) A list of all known applicable permits that will be required to perform the proposed work. You should respond to this requirement element whether or not permits are required.
- 9) Budget narrative/justification. In order to allow reviewers to fully evaluate the appropriateness of costs, all applications must include a detailed budget narrative and a justification to support all proposed budget categories for each fiscal year.

Personnel costs should be broken out by named PI and number of months and percentage of time requested per year per PI. Support for each PI should be commensurate with their stated involvement each year in the milestones chart (see Required Elements (6) Milestone chart). Any unnamed personnel (graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, technicians) should be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to PI personnel costs above. The contribution of any personnel to the project goals should be explained.

Travel costs should be broken out by number of people traveling, destination and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Equipment costs should describe the equipment to be purchased, and its contribution to the achievement of the project goals.

If more than one institution is collaborating in a project awarded funds, the lead institution will be the only institution to directly receive funds from TAMU/GCOOS-RA. A separate budget justification is required for each subaward. Signed approval from each identified subaward institution is also required. The lead institution is responsible for sending funds to their subaward

institutions. For acquisition contracts, the purpose and cost or price must be fully justified, and the contract must fully comply with 2 C.F.R. 200.317-.326.

Applications are permitted to include the costs of project-level data management, including: coordinating, organizing, documenting, formatting, or otherwise preparing datasets for submission to NOAA or non-NOAA data facilities; establishing and maintaining data access tools and services and related metadata; managing non-digital data that are not required to be made publicly accessible, including laboratory notebooks, preliminary analyses, drafts of scientific papers, plans for future research, peer review reports, communications with colleagues, or physical objects, such as laboratory specimens.

An applicant requesting funds for indirect costs in its proposal budget that has a current Federally approved rate should submit documentation of the indirect cost rate agreement as an attachment to its application submission. An applicant without a Federally approved rate should refer to Section IV.F. of this Announcement regarding options.

- 10) CD 511. Certification Regarding Lobbying. Lead institutions can submit these forms through the grants.gov CD511 document placeholder without a hard signature because electronic signatures are allowed on documents from the submitting institution.
- 11) Standard Budget Form see template at the end of this document and this link at https://gcoos.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/HABSocioeconomic-RFP-Budget\_template.xls
  - Provide separate budgets for each subaward and indicate the basis for the cost estimates.
  - Describe project activities for subawards and products/services to be obtained for acquisitions and indicate the applicability or necessity of each to the project.
  - List total subaward and contractor costs on Lad institution page.
  - Signed approval from the institution of each identified subaward and contractor should be provided.
- 12) Provide one list that includes all (U.S. and Foreign) collaborators, advisors, and advisees for each investigator (principal and co-principal investigators, post-docs, and subawardees), complete with corresponding institutions. Submit only one, combined and alphabetized list per application in an excel spreadsheet using First Name, Last Name and Institution for the column headings.
  - Collaborators are individuals who have participated in a project or publication within the last 48 months with any investigator, including co-authors on publications in the resumes. Collaborators also include those persons with which the investigators may have ongoing collaboration negotiations.
  - Advisees and Advisors do not have a time limit. Advisees are persons with whom the
    individual investigator has had an association as thesis advisor or postdoctoral
    sponsor. Advisors include an individual's own graduate and postgraduate advisors.

- Unfunded participants in the proposed study should also be listed (but not their collaborators). This information is critical for identifying potential conflicts of interests and avoiding bias in the selection of reviewers.
- 13) Key Contacts form. All applicants must submit the Key Contacts form. This form can be found on the NCCOS website: https://coastalscience.noaa.gov/about/application-forms. Please download and save this form. This form identifies the official applicant contacts.
- 14) A list of potential peer reviewers on a page after the Summary Title Page.
- 15) Letters from unfunded collaborators **are required**, verifying their contribution to the project. This is key if the project relies on datasets from unfunded entities and **must** state that the PIs will have access to the data as described. These letters do not count against the page limit for the Project Description. Letters of support will **not** be accepted.
- 16) Applications containing known subawards must provide:
  - Title page as described about, Budget summary, Budget Justification, Current and Pending Support, and Key Contacts.
  - Signed approval from the institution of each subaward and contractor should be provided.
  - We also request submission of the indirect rate agreement for subawards, if applicable. Applicants should provide Key Contacts for acquisition contracts and may provide additional information similar to that requested in this section for an acquisition contract.

Permits, accomplishments, Biographical sketches and the collaborators lists should be supplied to the lead institution in order for them to be combined within the lead application information.

#### **B.** Submission Dates and Times

The **required** letters of intent (LOI) in pdf format must be sent by e-mail at info@gcoos.org and must be received by 11:59 Eastern Time on August 15, 2019. Please note that the LOI is only for review panel planning. No feedback will be given and it will not be used for making decisions. Proposals will not be accepted if an LOI was not submitted by the due date and time.

- Applicants will receive an email verification of receipt.
- Full applications must be received by 11:59p.m. Eastern Time on the September 13, 2019. An email of acknowledgment will be sent within 24 hours of receipt.

# C. Funding Restrictions

- Indirect Costs: If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a Federal agency it may choose to use the de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Cost as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414.
- TAMU/GCOOS-RA will not fund start up or operational costs for private business ventures and neither fees nor profits will be considered as allowable costs

# D. Other Submission Requirements

• Applicants must contact the Program Manager for non-electronic submission instructions.

# V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

- 1) Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals: (35 percent)
- 2) Technical/scientific merit: This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Does the proposal include an acceptable Data Management Plan that includes details on the types of data and information expected and how and when the data will be shared? (35 percent)
- 3) Overall qualifications of applicants: This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. This includes the capability of the investigator and collaborators to complete the proposed work as evidenced by past research accomplishments, previous cooperative work, timely communication, and the sharing of findings, data, and other research. (15 percent)
- 4) Project costs: The Budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. (10 percent)
- 5) Outreach and education: The applicant must include plans for communicating and disseminating the results of research in ways that are appropriate to inform the relevant entities that will use the results of the proposed work, including specific products, outcomes, and timing of the proposed work that will be used in achieving this goal. (5 percent)

### **B.** Review and Selection Process

Once an application has been received by TAMU/GCOOS-RA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Ineligible, incomplete, and/or non-responsive applications may be eliminated from further review. TAMU/GCOOS-RA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that can easily be rectified or cured. All applications that pass this initial review will be evaluated and scored individually by independent peer mail review and/or by independent peer panel review.

Both Federal and non-Federal experts may be used in this process. The peer mail reviewers will be individuals with expertise in the subjects addressed by particular applications. Each mail reviewer will see only certain individual applications within his or her area of expertise and score them individually on a scale of one to five, where scores represent respectively: Excellent (5), Very Good (4), Good (3), Fair (2), Poor (1). Reviewers will consider the relative weighting of the evaluation criteria in providing an overall proposal score.

The peer panel will comprise several individuals, with each individual having expertise in a separate area, so that the panel, as a whole, covers a range of relevant scientific expertise. The panel will have access to all mail reviews of proposals and will use the mail reviews in discussion and evaluation of the entire slate of proposals. The peer panel shall rate the proposals using the evaluation criteria and scores provided above and used by the mail reviewers. Individual peer panel reviewers will consider the relative weighting of the evaluation criteria in providing their individual score. The individual peer panelists' scores shall be combined, using one or more methods, to obtain a numerical ranking of the proposals. If a full review (mail and panel) is conducted, only the panel scores shall be used to rank each proposal.

The Program Manager will neither vote or score applications as part of the independent peer review panel nor participate in discussion of the merits of the applications other than to ask questions. Those applications receiving an average panel score of ``Fair" or ``Poor" will not be given further consideration, and applicants will be notified of non-selection.

For the applications scored by the reviewers as either "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good", the Program Manager will (a) create a ranking of the applications to be recommended for funding using the panel scores; (b) recommend the total duration of funding for each application; and (c) recommend the amount of funds available for each application subject to the availability of fiscal year funds. Recommendations for funding are forwarded from the Program Manager to the GCOOS-RA Executive Committee for the final funding recommendation decision. Recommendations will be made using the rank order generated by the peer-review process unless justification is provided to select a proposal out of rank order. Justification must be based on one or more of the selection factors listed below in

#### Section V.C.

TAMU/GCOOS-RA reserves the right to negotiate the budget with the applicants that have been selected to receive awards, which may include requesting that the applicant remove certain costs, combine budgets into a single application, or change the lead institution. Additionally, GCOOS-RA may request that the applicant modify objectives or work plans and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. TAMU/GCOOS-RA may select some, all, or none of the applications, or part(s) of any particular application, and may request that applicants combine projects

The TAMU/GCOOS-RA sponsored research office will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.205. In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by TAMU/GCOOS-RA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. See also "Review of Risk" in Section VI. of this Announcement.

When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), verbatim anonymous copies of reviews and summaries of review panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the applicant. Declined applications will be held in TAMU/GCOOS-RA for three years in accordance with current retention policies, and then destroyed.

#### C. Selection Factors

Proposals may be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

- 1) Availability of funding.
- 2) Balance/distribution of funds.
  - (a) By type of institutions.
  - (b) By type of partners.
- 3) Program priorities and policy factors. Refer to section I.B.
- 4) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups.
- 5) Adequacy of information necessary for TAMU/GCOOS-RA to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation by NCCOS staff before recommendations for funding are made to the GCOOS Executive Committee.

Awards may also be modified for selected projects depending on budget availability or according to the selection factors listed above.

# D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of the HAB applications will begin upon receipt. Applicants may be notified of award or declination by October 2019, and applicants should use a start date of November 1, 2019.

# VI. Award Administration Information

#### A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the TAMU/GCOOS Program manager and is the authorizing document.

If Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the use of human subjects is required for the project, the award date will be delayed until approval is received. PIs are encouraged to seek IRB approval during the peer review process period to avoid delayed start dates.

### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1) Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf.

2) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements

Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4.

3) Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. A current version of this document is available at https://go.usa.gov/xRW4R. In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division in the Grants Online award package may contain special award conditions unique to a project, including conditions that may limit the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements and/or stating other compliance requirements for the award as applicable.

# 4) Limitation of Liability

Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not have been appropriated yet for the programs listed in this notice. TAMU/GCOOS - RA are not responsible for proposal preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige TAMU/GCOOS - RA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

# 5) Unpaid Tax Liability and Recent Felony Conviction Certification

When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicant organizations a form to be completed by the applicant's authorized representative making a certification regarding federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any federal law by the organization.

# 6) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216\_6.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/NEPA-40CFR1500\_1508.pdf.

Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. Failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment. See also Section IV.B. of this announcement.

# 7) Review of Risk

After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.205. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

# 8) Minority Serving Institutions

TAMU/GCOOS - RA is strongly committed to increasing the participation of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic serving institutions, Tribal colleges and universities, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian institutions, and institutions that work in underserved communities.

### 9) Permits

It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain all permits and approvals from federal, state, and local governments and private landowners where necessary for the proposed work to be conducted. If applicable, documentation of requests or approvals of environmental permits must be received by the federal program office prior to release of funding. Failure to apply for and obtain federal, state, and local permits, approvals, or letters of agreement may delay the award of funds if a project is otherwise selected for funding. In some cases, if additional permits and approvals are required after an application is selected, funds may be withheld by the Grants Officer under a Special Award Condition requiring the recipient to submit required permits and approvals.

## 10) Access to Information

Patentable ideas, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, disclosure of which may harm the proposer, should be included in proposals only when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. Such information should be clearly marked in the proposal or included as a separate statement accompanying the proposal and should be appropriately labeled with a legend such as, "The following is [proprietary or confidential] information that [name of proposing organization] requests not be released to persons outside the Government, except for purposes of review and evaluation." As an alternative example in the event that an application contains information or data that you do not want disclosed prior to award for purposes other than the evaluation of the application, mark each page containing such information or data with the words "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information - Limited Use" at the top of the page to assist TAMU/GCOOS - RA in making disclosure determinations. While TAMU/GCOOS - RA will make every effort to prevent

unauthorized access to such material, it is not responsible or in any way liable for the release of such material.

Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, which sets forth rules for DOC to make requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. The contents of funded applications may be subject to requests for release under the FOIA. Based on the information provided by the applicant, the confidentiality of the content of funded applications will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by law.

A proposal that results in an award will be available to the public on request, except for privileged information or material that is personal, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under law. Appropriate labeling in the proposal aids identification of what may be specifically exempt. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act, referenced in the paragraph above. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, TAMU/GCOOS - RA will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for merit review of the proposal or as otherwise authorized by law. Portions of proposals resulting in grants that contain descriptions of inventions in which either the Government or the grantee owns a right, title, or interest (including a nonexclusive license) will not normally be made available to the public until a reasonable time has been allowed for filing patent applications. TAMU/GCOOS - RA will notify the grantee of receipt of requests for copies of funded proposals so the grantee may advise TAMU/GCOOS - RA of such inventions described, or other confidential, commercial or proprietary information contained in the proposal.

In addition, applicants are also reminded that under 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e) they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a TAMU/GCOOS - RA financial assistance award. By submitting an application, an applicant (1) agrees to cooperate with TAMU/GCOOS - RA and external project and program evaluators and submit required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner, and (2) acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in recipient financial, performance and other reports, may be used by the TAMU/GCOOS - RA in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance projects and programs.

Applicants are notified that TAMU/GCOOS - RA personnel who enter into appropriate confidentiality and nondisclosure agreements may access, review, and evaluate applicant and recipient information and data.

# 11) Scientific Integrity

The TAMU Research Program adheres to the principles of scientific integrity. This policy can be found at https://www.tamus.edu/research/research-compliance/responsible-conduct-of-research/.

# C. Reporting

# 12) Reporting Requirements

All performance (i.e. technical progress) reports shall be submitted electronically through TAMU/GCOOS – RA. Reports will be semiannual and reports on progress to date, report any challenges to the project as proposed occurring in the reporting period, and proposed solutions to those challenges. The project timeline should also be assessed. Reports should be emailed to the program manager in pdf format.

# 13) Data Reporting Requirement

(a) Data and information collected or created under TAMU/GCOOS - RA grants or cooperative agreements must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the TAMU/GCOOS - RA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.

Proposals submitted in response to this Announcement must include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages describing how these requirements will be satisfied. The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the Data Management Guidance provided by TAMU/GCOOS - RA in the Announcement (see Data Management Guidance to Proposal Writers below). The contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof), and past performance regarding such plans, will be considered as part of proposal review. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget. A published DOI is an acceptable data archive.

(b) TAMU/GCOOS - RA may, at its own discretion, make publicly visible the Data Management Plan from funded proposals, or use information from the Data Management Plan to produce a formal metadata record and include that metadata in a Catalog to indicate the pending availability of new data.

- (c) Proposal submitters are hereby advised that the final pre-publication manuscripts of scholarly articles produced entirely or primarily with TAMU/GCOOS RA funding will be required to be submitted to NOAA Institutional Repository and the TAMU Repository (http://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/) after acceptance, and no later than upon publication. Such manuscripts shall be made publicly available by TAMU/GCOOS RA one year after publication by the journal. Data and information collected or created under TAMU/GCOOS RA grants must be made discoverable by and accessible to the general public, in a timely fashion (typically within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, unless an exemption is granted by the TAMU/GCOOS RA Program. Data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely-used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards.
  - 14) Data Management Guidance to Proposal Writers
- a) Responsible GCOOS-RA Data Manager for questions regarding data management and implementing this guidance: Felimon Gayanilo, Interim Data Manager, GCOOS-RA, Felimon.Gayanilo@tamucc.edu.
- b) Data Accessibility: The TAMU/GCOOS RA Program requires that public access to grant-produced data be enabled as follows; Data Management Plans (see Section IV.B.2.) submitted with Proposals should reflect one or more of the option(s) provided by TAMU/GCOOS RA.
  - Option A: For the majority of project data, except those listed below, funding recipients are expected to submit data to the GCOOS-RA which will provide public access, archiving, discovery metadata meeting TAMU/GCOOS RA standards and formats, and a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) (https://www.doi.org/faq.html).
  - Option B: For any other data not appropriate for submission to TAMU/GCOOS RA, funding recipients are expected to submit data to an appropriate data facility (i.e., NIH GenBank for genomics data) that preserves data, properly manages archived data to assure their quality, mints DOIs, and makes archived data and related information available to users in a timely and efficient manner. Funding recipients should submit discovery metadata meeting IOOS standards and formats documenting these non-IOOS data archives to the Responsible GCOOS-RA Data Manager listed above.
  - Option C: For limited-release data that are limited by law, regulation, policy, security requirements, commercial or international agreements, or valid technical considerations, funding recipients may request permission not to make data publicly accessible from the Responsible TAMU/GCOOS - RA Official listed above.

- (c) Technical recommendations: The TAMU/GCOOS RA Program is not offering specific technical guidance. Proposals are to describe their proposed approach. Use of open-standard formats and methods is encouraged. Definitions of data management terms are included here:
  - Environmental data are recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata. Digital audio or video recordings of environmental phenomena (such as animal sounds or undersea video) are included in this definition. Numerical model outputs are included in this definition, particularly if they are used to support the conclusion of a peer-reviewed publication. Data collected in a laboratory or other controlled environment, such as measurements of animals and chemical processes, are included in this definition.
  - Sharing data means making data publicly visible and accessible in a timely (see below) manner at no cost (or no more than the cost of reproduction), in a format which is machine- readable and based on open standards, along with metadata necessary to find and properly use the data. Data are to be made available in a form that would permit further analysis or reuse: data must be encoded in a machine-readable format, preferably using existing open- standard formats; data must be sufficiently documented, preferably using open metadata standards, to enable users to independently read and understand the data. Data should undergo quality control (QC) and a description of the QC process and results should be referenced in the metadata.
  - Machine-readable means the data are stored on a computer in a digital format whose structure is well described, and which can be read without the aid of a human. An open- standard format is one which does not require proprietary software to be read. Metadata is documentation that is machine-readable and structured according to an open-standard format and which describes the data so that users can search for, access, read, understand, and use the data. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) EXtensible Markup Language (XML) is an acceptable metadata format
  - Timely means no later than publication of a peer-reviewed article based on the data, or two years after the data are collected and verified, or two years after the original end date of the grant (not including any extensions or follow-on funding), whichever is soonest, unless a delay has been authorized by the TAMU/GCOOS RA funding program.

# VII. Agency Contacts

• Program Management/Technical Information:

 $Dr.\ Barbara\ Kirkpatrick \mid TAMU/GCOOS\text{-}RA\ Executive\ Director$ 

ph: (941)724-4320 | barb.kirkpatrick@gcoos.org

• Grants Administration Information:

Andrea F. Calland | Senior Proposal Administrator I | Proposal Services Sponsored Research Services | Texas A&M University 3578 TAMU | College Station, TX 77845-3578 ph: 979.845.8731 | fax: 979.862.3250 | acalland@tamu.edu

# VIII. Other Information

Check List for Required and Requested Documents:

- 1) Title Page
- 2) Abstract
- 3) Project Description
- 4) References
- 5) Milestone Chart
- 6) Bio Sketch
- 7) Permits (if none, say so)
- 8) Budget Narrative and Justification (One for the lead institution and each subaward/subcontract).
- 9) CD-511
- 10) Budget spreadsheet (One for the lead institution and each subaward/subcontract)
- 11) Alphabetized Collaborator List (ONE Excel spreadsheet for all)
- 12) Key Contact form
- 13) Indirect Rate Agreement (requested).
- 14) If Applicable: Signed Approval from subaward/subcontractor institutes
- 15) Letters from unfunded collaborators

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\*SIGNATURES REQUIRED ONLY FOR REVISED BUDGET