



Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Fisheries Restoration Program 2020 Request for Proposals

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) is seeking proposals to address the human dimensions component of the “Reduction of Post-release Mortality from Barotrauma in Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Recreational Fisheries” project. The GSMFC is partnering with [NOAA’s Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration](#)

[Program](#) (DARRP) on this project to restore reef fish species impacted by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The maximum contract amount is \$200,000 over a three-year period beginning in March 2021.

Dates: Proposals must be received by e-mail to Charlie Robertson (crobertson@gsmfc.org) by 5:00 pm Central Standard Time (CST) on January 15, 2021. The period for this work will be March 2021 through June 2024.

The project plans to reduce post-release mortality by researching and developing Gulf-wide best handling practices for reef fish, making equipment and tools available to recreational reef fish anglers to implement those practices, and providing outreach and education information to increase anglers’ awareness and knowledge on their use.

Proposals are requested that seek to develop and administer (1) a survey method to measure changes in angler prevalence of use and perception of fish descender devices (FDDs) and other tools; and (2) determine effectiveness of the outreach and education programming at different stages (prior, during, and after implementation) of the project. We will select the proposal which is best equipped for this project to develop and administer engaging, and statistically valid attitude, knowledge, awareness, and adoption of best handling practices surveys. An initial survey will be developed and implemented by January 2022 and a follow-up survey implemented by January 2024. The surveys will specifically target reef fish anglers in the Gulf of Mexico and will address the objectives identified in this request.

Survey Objectives:

- 1) *Develop survey approach:* The sub-recipient will be conducting surveys across the Gulf of Mexico and will develop a strategy to reach all sectors of the recreational reef fish fishery in the Gulf region. An initial survey will focus on what the baseline is for anglers using best handling practices for releasing reef fish, such as awareness, attitudes toward, knowledge and adoption of best handling practices (which includes the use of FDDs and venting tools), and what are the barriers affecting adoption of these practices. After outreach activities start, follow-up surveys will collect information to determine whether there were quantifiable changes in the variables measured during the initial survey. Proposals should describe the methodological approach to ensure that active reef fish anglers in the Gulf of Mexico are

surveyed. Various groups (e.g., private, charter, headboat, etc.) within the recreational angling community comprise the project's target population.

- 2) *Develop and execute surveys*: Based on the survey approach identified above, the sub-recipient will develop cross-sectional and/or longitudinal surveys instruments and execute the surveys. The project's committee will provide suggestions to the proposed surveys instruments and methodologies. Information collected should include but is not limited to:
 - A. Awareness of protocols for handling discarded fish
 - B. Awareness of best handling practices (including FDDs and venting tools)
 - C. The benefits of using best handling practices (including FDDs and venting tools)
 - D. Barriers to the adoption of best handling practices (including FDDs and venting tools)
 - E. How and when to use, or not use, FDDs and venting tools
 - F. Collect demographic information
 - G. How FDD use by individuals may change over time
- 3) *Data collection & analysis*: The sub-recipient will collect all survey responses and conduct analyses on those responses. Timely analyses and reports will include methods that allow for a comparison of the potential changes in angler awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and adoption of best handling practices over the life of the proposed outreach activities to evaluate their effectiveness. It will also document how individual anglers' adoption of best handling practices may change over time.
- 4) *Performance metrics*: The project committee will rely on the expertise of the applicant to devise relevant performance metrics which may be adaptively managed in coordination with the project management team. Performance metrics should be complementary and consistent with other similar projects, both completed and ongoing, in the Gulf and South Atlantic regions.

Proposal review and selection procedures: Proposals must be received via e-mail (to crobertson@gsmfc.org) by 5:00 pm CST on January 15, 2021. All proposals must adhere to the following provisions and requirements and must be received in a timely manner. Failure to follow these requirements will result in proposals being returned without review. The proposals will be reviewed by a Review Committee comprised of members of the Project Management Team. The Committee will consider which proposal best meets the objectives of the program. Proposals will be ranked by the Committee based on the following criteria outlined below.

- **Relevance/Applicability of Proposal (40 points):** This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and relevance to the project. This includes the following questions: Is the proposal relevant to the "Reduction of Post-release Mortality from Barotrauma in Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Recreational Fisheries" project and will it assist in understanding angler attitudes toward best handling practices (15 points)? Will the project collect information that measures changes in attitudes over the course of several years (15 points)? Will the project address the various groups that make up the Gulf of Mexico reef fish recreational fishery (10 points)?

- **Technical Merit (35 points):** This assesses whether the approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear goals and objectives. This includes the following questions: Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives are realistic and can be reached within the proposed project period (15 points)? Is the project design appropriate for addressing the survey objectives (10 points)? Does the project design include a project evaluation that ensures the goals and objectives of the project will be met (10 points)?
- **Budget:** Do the expected outcomes/deliverables from the project justify the funding request? Are the costs allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with the GSMFC's project-specific cost categories outlined below and are they in compliance with *OMB Uniform Guidance* as applicable? (15 points)
- **Overall Qualification of Applicants (10 points):** Does the applicant show the capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects (5 points)? Does the applicant demonstrate a knowledge and comprehension of the subject, and is the applicant familiar with related work that is completed or ongoing (5 points)?

Format requirements for proposals:

All proposal materials should be submitted in Adobe PDF or a common word processing format, and when printed out should meet all format requirements. All pages must be double-spaced, printed or typed in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins.

Proposal Format:

The full proposal includes a Project Summary (1-page limit), Project Narrative (15-page limit), Appendices or Attachments (15-page limit, including a Data Management Plan of up to two pages and Curriculum Vitae for PI(s) no more than two pages), and Budget Narrative (no page limit). Proposal format should be in at least a 12-point font and double-spaced. Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Therefore, the Project Narrative may not exceed 15 pages double-spaced. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 15-page limit. Budget justification and indirect cost rate documentation sections do not count towards the 15-page limit. Appendices may be included but must not exceed a total of 15 pages in length. Appendices or attachments may be combined into a single file and include information such as resumes, CVs, and/or letters of support. Additional informational material beyond the page limits will be disregarded. Specifically, proposals must include the following information in the format outlined below.

A. Project summary (1-page limit):

1. Organization title
2. Principle Investigator(s) (PI) and other project team members
3. Address, telephone number, and email address of PIs
4. Project title
5. Project objective for the project period and brief description of how project success will be evaluated
6. Summary of work to be performed within the project period

7. Budget information

- B. Project Narrative (15-page limit): Each project must be completely and accurately described. The main body of the proposal should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and should include: specific objectives and performance measures for the period of the proposed work and the expected significance; relation to longer-term goals of the PI's work; and relation to other work planned, anticipated, or underway through Federal assistance. Proposed work should be for the period of March 2021 through June 2024.

Each project must be described as follows:

1. Identification of problem(s): Describe the specific problem(s) or area(s) of interest to be addressed. Specify the Research Priority(ies) (see above) that most closely relates to the proposal.
2. Project objectives: Objectives should be simple and understandable; as specific and quantitative as possible; clear as to the "what and when," but should avoid the "how and why", and; attainable within the time, money and human resources available. Projects should be accomplishment oriented and identify specific performance measures.
3. Project description: The project description is the scientific or technical action plan of activities that are to be accomplished during each budget period of the project. This description must include the specific methodologies, by project job activity, proposed for accomplishing the proposal's objective(s). The project description must include a milestone table that summarizes the procedures/objectives that are to be attained in each project month covered. Table format should follow sequential month rather than calendar month (i.e. Project period Month 1, Month 2... versus October, November...).
4. Permitting: The proposal must describe any permit requirements related to the proposed research (i.e., IRB). The proposal also must describe what steps the investigators will take to obtain the necessary permits.
5. Impacts, benefits or results expected: Identify and document the results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities. Specifically identify management applicability of the work being proposed.
6. Project management: Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Include resumes of principal investigators, which may be appendices or attachments. List all persons directly employed by the applicant who will be involved with the project. If a consultant and/or subcontractor is selected prior to application submission, include the name and qualifications of the consultant and/or subcontractor and the process used for selection. Describe who will monitor project performance. Also include participation by persons or groups other than the applicant. Describe how Federal, state, and non-governmental entities, particularly members of fishing communities, will participate in the project, and the nature of their participation.
7. Evaluation of the project: The applicant is required to provide a description of project accomplishments and progress towards the project objectives and performance measures at the end of each funding period and in the final report. The

application must describe the methodology or procedures to be followed to quantify the results of the project.

8. Data sharing plan (not included in the 15-page limitation; can be submitted as an appendix): Environmental data and information collected 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. 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 contents of the Data Management Plan (or absence thereof) will be considered part of the proposal review process. 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 the 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. Use of open-standard data formats and methods is preferred. Proposals are permitted to include the costs of data sharing or archiving in their budgets. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. Data eventually will be made available to the public via the NOAA Data Integration Visualization Exploring and Reporting (DIVER) application (<https://www.diver.orr.noaa.gov/>).
- C. Total project costs and Budget Narrative: Total project costs are the amount of funds required to accomplish what is proposed in the Project Description. Provide a detailed table with Budget Narrative (as an attachment not included in the page limits for the Project Narrative or Appendices) to support the requested items or activities (personnel/salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contract costs (such as vessel charters), and indirect costs.) Supplies (<\$5,000/item) and equipment (>= \$5,000/item) should be broken out in as much detail as possible. If indirect costs are proposed, include a copy of the current Federally approved rate if applicable. Additional cost detail may be required prior to a final analysis of overall cost allowability, allocability, and reasonableness. Please note the following restrictions for salaries and fringe benefits:
- Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. Hourly rates and projected hours worked on the project and/or percentage of time and yearly salary should be included for all salary requests. Applicants are strongly encouraged to request reasonable amounts of funding for salaries and fringe benefits to ensure the proposal is competitive.

Key dates:

Call for proposals	November 6, 2020
Proposal submissions due by 5:00 pm CST (late proposals will not be considered)	January 15, 2021
Selection Notification	February 5, 2021
Contract Begins	March 2021

The deadline to submit proposals is **COB Friday, January 15, 2021**. Please submit proposals by e-mail to Charlie Robertson (crobertson@gsmfc.org). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your interest in the project.

Charlie Robertson
Fisheries Restoration Program Coordinator
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
2404 Government Street
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
Tel: (228) 327-0297
Fax: (228) 875-6604
crobertson@gsmfc.org