



Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Fisheries Restoration Program 2020 Request for Pre-proposals

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) is requesting pre-proposals for the release mortality validation research 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. We are planning to make \$500,000 available to fund 2-3 projects through this request.

Dates: Pre-proposals (required) must be received by electronic mail to Charlie Robertson (crobertson@gsmfc.org) by 5:00 pm Central Standard Time on November 30, 2020. Full proposals must be received by 11:59 pm Central Standard Time on February 1, 2021. The period for this work will be April 1, 2021 – December 31, 2023.

Pre-proposals are requested that seek to address one or more of the research priorities listed below in different areas of the Gulf of Mexico where barotrauma affects snapper-grouper species. When applicable, projects should try to engage charter boats, headboats, and/or private anglers, including influential recreational anglers, to increase comfort and buy-in for the use of descender devices. Pre-proposals should clearly outline the project objectives, methodologies, research outputs, where the work would be performed, and a detailed budget. It is critically important to clearly and explicitly articulate how the proposed work addresses one or more of the research priorities identified in this request.

Research priorities:

- 1) Validate the biological and logistical effectiveness of descender devices, other release tools, and/or best handling practices for releasing high-priority snapper-grouper species in different locations and environments. High-priority snapper-grouper species include species for which few release mortality studies have been conducted, species that have been studied but for which there is not a consensus regarding release mortality rates, species for which 100% release mortality rates are assumed for stock assessments, and/or species receiving high scores in the NOAA Fisheries 2016 Action Plan for Release Mortality Science (i.e., red snapper, gag, greater amberjack, grey triggerfish, red grouper, and goliath grouper).
- 2) Utilize capture-tag-recapture, telemetry (including pop-off satellite archival tags, or PSATs), underwater video, and other techniques to develop more-accurate release mortality rates for high-priority snapper-grouper species.

- 3) Assess the prevalence of depredation on fish released using descender devices and determine the species responsible for the depredation.
- 4) Test the effectiveness of new technologies and/or fishing practices to reduce the depredation of released fish species by sharks, marine mammals and other predators.

Proposal review and selection procedures:

Pre-proposals must be received via e-mail (to crobertson@gsmfc.org) by 5:00 pm Central Standard Time on November 30, 2020. By December 18, 2020, GSMFC will inform applicants, based upon their pre-proposal, whether the GSMFC encourages or discourages submission of a full proposal. All those who submit complete and timely pre-proposals and meet all requirements are eligible to submit a full proposal. Full proposals must adhere to the following provisions and requirements and must be received by 11:59 p.m. Central Standard Time on February 1, 2020. Failure to follow these requirements will result in proposals being returned without review. The pre-proposals will be reviewed by a Review Committee comprised of members of the Project Management Team. The Committee will request full proposals for each project determined to best meet the objectives of the program. Full proposals will be ranked by the Committee based on the five main criteria outlined below.

- **Significance:** Does the proposal adequately address at least one of the research priorities identified in the RFP? (30 points)
- **Technical Merit:** Is the project technically sound and are the project objectives clearly stated and applicable to the RFP research priorities? (25 points)
- **Feasibility:** Are the methodologies and timeline clearly stated, logical, and have a high probability of achieving the project objectives? (15 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? (10 points)
- **Impact:** Does the project have a potential to positively impact the overall outcome of the Fisheries Restoration Program? If applicable, does the project sufficiently engage parts of the recreational fishing community and have adequate education and outreach components to positively influence recreational fishing activities? (20 points)

Format requirements for both pre-proposals and full proposals:

All application 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 single-(pre-proposal) or double-(full proposal) spaced, printed or typed in at least 12-point font, and printable on 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper, with 1-inch margins.

Pre-proposal Format:

Pre-proposals are required. The pre-proposal process is intended to provide an indication to potential applicants of the technical merit and the relevancy of the proposed project to the GSMFC before preparing a full proposal. The intent is to reduce the burden of preparing full proposals that do not have a high probability for being funded. When drafting a pre-proposal, applicants should clearly convey the management impact and applicability of their proposed research for the priority area to which they are applying. Late or incomplete pre-proposals, as well as those that deviate from content or format requirements, will not be reviewed by the Review Committee.

Each pre-proposal may not exceed two pages, single-spaced (though may be formatted using double spacing), using the format described above and should provide:

- A. Title of project;
- B. Background section that sets the stage for the work and identifies which one of the priorities that the pre-proposal addresses directly;
- C. Rationale of why the work should be conducted and how it is relevant to the priorities;
- D. Explanation of proposed project's applicability to research and management priorities and outline any stakeholder involvement;
- E. Clear statement of research objectives and general methodology to be used;
- F. Identification of required permits (i.e. ESA, MMPA) and permit numbers, if applicable; and
- G. Estimated budget amount (Applicants may include cost sharing, but it is not required and is not part of the evaluation criteria for this pre-proposal process);
- H. In addition, and not counted towards the two-page limit, the applicant must provide: A Cover page that includes the title of the project, the name, affiliation, and address of the primary investigators with e-mail and phone contact information, the estimated total budget requested, and duration of the project (start and end dates).

Full Application Format:

The full application includes a Project Summary (one-page limit), Project Narrative (15-page limit), Appendices or Attachments (15-page limit, including a Data Management Plan of up to 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, 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. Principal Investigator(s) (PI).
 3. Address, telephone number, and email address of Principal Investigator(s).

4. Priority area related to your application (see Research Priorities above).
 5. Project title.
 6. Project objectives for the project period and brief description of how project success will be evaluated.
 7. Summary of work to be performed within the project period.
 8. 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.

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" (which is fully addressed in the project description), 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 Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, or other permit requirements related to the proposed research. The proposal also must describe whether the investigators have the necessary permits in hand, or what steps the investigators have taken to obtain the necessary permits. All proposals must respond to this required element whether or not permits are required. If no permits are required, this section must indicate "no permits are required."
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. Project impacts: Describe how these products or services will be made available to the fisheries and management communities.
 8. Education and outreach: How will this project provide a focused and effective education and outreach strategy? This includes the degree to which the potential users of the results, i.e., recreational anglers, have been involved in the planning of the activity, will be involved in the execution of the activity and/or are providing funds, and whether there is a plan to disseminate the results to user groups and the public.
 9. 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.
 10. 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.

The deadline to submit pre-proposals is **COB Monday, November 30, 2020**. Please submit pre-proposals by email to Charlie Robertson (crobertson@gsmfc.org). If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

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