

21 October 2021

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST NUMBER W9126G-22-2-SOI-6092 PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN FISCAL YEAR 2022

Applicants must be a member of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU): Gulf Coast (W9126G-12-2-0019) South Florida-Caribbean (W9126G-16-2-0002) Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast (W9126G-13-2-0011)

Project Title: Oyster surveys for the pre-construction engineering and design phase of the Matagorda Ship Channel Improvement Project, Port Lavaca, Texas.

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) will be used to identify potential investigators for a project to be funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Galveston District which provides professional and technical support for the environmental compliance requirements for the USACE Galveston District Civil Works Missions. Approximately **\$917,000.00** is expected to be available to support this project, depending on availability of funds.

Background:

The Matagorda Ship Channel Improvement Project, was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (2019) for the project requires preconstruction oyster surveys of the project area to finalize the mitigation requirements and the identification of mitigation locations(s) with suitable conditions and available surface area to offset the unavoidable impacts to oysters that would result from the project.

Type of Award:

This project will be awarded under the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 - Delegation of Authority under Section 213(a) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, dated 10 March 2015

Such awards may be administered through a CESU only upon mutual agreement and official authorization by both parties of the acceptance of the application of the CESU Network IDC rate (17.5%).

In accordance with section 6305 – Using cooperative agreements of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), all CESU projects must carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation, instead of acquiring goods or services for the exclusive direct benefit of the United States Government.

In accordance with section 6305 – Using cooperative agreements of the Federal Grant and

Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), substantial involvement is expected between the federal partner and the nonfederal partner when carrying out the activities specified in the project agreement. The exact nature of the government's involvement will be defined in the statement of objectives, issued with a request for full proposal.

Note: Applicant must be a non-federal partner in one of the CESU Units listed at the top of this announcement in order to be qualified for consideration.

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:

The primary objective of this project is to collect and provide information needed to finalize the mitigation plan for the project. Information is needed to quantify the project impacts and assess the suitability of mitigation locations for oyster reef propagation. The survey activities follow the protocols used by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and include the use of electronic equipment and bottom grabs/cores to characterize substrate composition followed by verification of hard bottom targets using divers or hydraulic patent tongs.

- a. The surveys should collect all position data with a minimum requirement of using higher level DGPS technologies or RTK GPS that provide sub-meter accuracy.
 - i. Side scan sonar: Data should be collected using a high-resolution side scan sonar system (single or dual frequency 255/400/900 KHz) to identify or detect hard bottom habitat. Side scan sonar results should be ground truthed using grab samples.
 - ii. Sub-bottom profiler: Sub-bottom profiler data should also be collected to determine substrate strata type down to a depth of 25 feet. Sub-bottom profiles should be tied to DGPS positional information and analyzed to determine start and stop of soft sediments and surface shell alongside scan survey transects.
 - iii. Bathymetric survey: A bathymetric survey should be conducted of the entire project area footprint including the 500-foot radius of the project area.
- b. Hard Bottom Verification:
 - i. Hard bottom targets should be verified by collecting one-quarter meter square quadrats per acre of hard bottom identified, with each quadrat sample spaced a minimum distance of 150 feet apart.
 - ii. Each quadrat verification sample should be collected manually by divers (preferred) or by hydraulic patent tongs comparable to 0.25 square meter sample size.
 - iii. All live and dead oyster shell brought to the surface must be enumerated, lengths measured (in 5 mm increments) and recorded in final report using following categories (# Spat (0-1.5 inches = 0-40 mm), # Submarket/Juvenile (1.5-2.9 inches = 41-75 mm), # Market (3.0+ inches = 76+ mm). Both Live and Dead shell must be categorized.
 - iv. The number of live and dead oysters per acre of each hard bottom target within the project area and within the 500-foot buffer around workspaces should be determined to provide an estimate of number of acres of all viable oyster habitat impacted or avoided in final report.
- c. Use of survey data to quantify project impacts to oyster reef and to employ ecological modeling strategies to identify potential mitigation areas conducive to oyster reef propagation.
- d. Report and Documentation

- i. A report with procedures, field data, with a results section summarizing the project impacts and characterization of the suitable mitigation sites.
- ii. Geo-referenced, maps of data collected overlayed with the project footprints.
- iii. Coordinates of all hard bottom targets' positions referenced in tabular form with GPS coordinates (Decimal Degrees in North American Datum 1983).
- iv. ESRI-compatible (ArcView 9.0+) shape files of bottom types identified in the survey area
- v. Bathymetry figures and ESRI-compatible (ArcView 9.0+) shape file bottom contours
- e. The selected PI may be requested to attend 2 to 3, one hour long resource agency meetings which may be attended virtually.

Note: At this time, we are only requesting that you demonstrate available qualifications and skills for performing similar or same type of work. You will be evaluated for request for a proposal based on skills, qualifications and certifications demonstrated in your SOI.

Preference will be given to statements of interest that demonstrate field technicians that have at least five years of experience conducting oyster surveys, conducting substrate characterization, and evaluating oyster reef restoration projects on the gulf coast, as well as a principal investigator that has the ability to synthesize collected field data into a cohesive report, including methods, results, statistical analysis, and management recommendations. Also, preference will be given to statements of interest that propose the use of divers over hydraulic patent tongs for oyster reef verification.

Period of Performance. The base period of performance is anticipated to be twelve (12) months from date of award.

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: <u>sandra.justman@usace.army.mil</u> and <u>Gregory.W.Bonnell@usace.army.mil</u> (Maximum length: 2 pages, single-spaced 12 pt. font).

- 1. Name, Organization, Cage Code, Duns number, and Contact Information (Email)
- **2.** Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
 - **a**. Biographical Sketch,
 - b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects,
 - c. Staff, faculty, or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise,
 - d. Any brief description of capabilities to successfully complete the project you may wish
 - to add (e.g., equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, etc.).

Note: A full study proposal and proposed budget are NOT requested at this time.

Review of Statements Received: All statements of interest received will be evaluated by a board comprised of one or more people at the receiving installation or activity, who will determine which statement(s) best meet the program objectives. Based on a review of the Statements of Interest received, an investigator or investigators will be invited to prepare a full study proposal. Statements will be evaluated based on the investigator's specific experience and capabilities in areas related to the study requirements.

Please send responses or direct questions to:

Sandy K. Justman Contract Specialist, Fort Worth District Directorate of Contracting

BUILDING STRONG® U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Phone: 817-886-1073 Fax: 817-886-6403 Email: <u>sandra.justman@usace.army.mil</u>

Greg Bonnell Regional Planning and Environmental Center (RPEC) Cell. (918) 951-0591 Gregory.W.Bonnell@usace.army.mil

Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest: RSOI will be posted on <u>www.Grants.gov</u> for 15 days, prior to the Government making a decision and requesting full proposals. Responses due by 5:00 P.M., Central Time, on <u>5 NOV 2021</u>.

[End of RSOI] [See below for DRAFT SOO]

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Environmental Natural Resource Technical Support U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District

Article III, (D) of the following Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU): Gulf Coast (W9126G-12-2-0019) South Florida-Caribbean (W9126G-16-2-0002) Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast (W9126G-13-2-0011)

1.0 PURPOSE

This Statement of Objectives (SOO) provides the details of technical support to be performed for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District. The purpose is to Collect, Analyze, and Apply Resource Data to finalize the mitigation plan for the Matagorda Ship Channel Improvement Project. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (2019) for the project requires preconstruction oyster surveys of the project area to finalize the mitigation requirements and the identification of mitigation locations(s) with suitable conditions and available surface area to offset the unavoidable impacts to oysters that would result from the project.

2.0 AUTHORITY

2.1 This project is authorized under the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 -Delegation of Authority under Section 213(a) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, dated 10 March 2015. An act to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes. The collection, analyzation, and application of resource data from this project will be used to finalize the mitigation plan for the Matagorda Ship Channel Improvement Project.

2.2 In accordance with section 6305-Using cooperative agreements of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), all CESU projects must carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation, instead of acquiring goods or services for the exclusive direct benefit of the United States Government.

2.3 In agreement with the above stated purpose, the recipient/cooperator agrees to provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and materials required to implement, in part, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Galveston District responsibilities pursuant to the section 6305.

2.4 In accordance with section 6305 – Using cooperative agreements of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), substantial involvement is expected between the Department of Defense and the recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated by the cooperative agreement. The DoD agrees to participate at a national level in support of the CESU program as accepted in the Master MOU for the establishment and continuation of the CESU program Article II 1-4 and Article VI 1-7.

2.5 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District technical representatives further (hence DoD) agrees to provide substantial involvement as directed under Article II (A) CESU Master Agreements to include, but are not limited to, the following:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District technical representatives are involved in development of study methodology, data gathering, analysis, and/or report writing
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District technical representatives actively participates and collaborates in carrying out the project plan of work, reviews and approves activities, helps train or select project staff or trainees
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District technical representatives incurs inkind or direct expenditures in carrying out the activities specified in the project agreement. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Providing computing services
 - Providing staff time to work on the project

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this project is to collect and provide information needed to finalize the mitigation plan for the project. Information is needed to quantify the project impacts and assess the suitability of mitigation locations for oyster reef propagation. The survey activities follow the protocols used by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and include the use of electronic equipment and bottom grabs/cores to characterize substrate composition followed by verification of hard bottom targets using divers or hydraulic patent tongs. The map showing the locations for the channel work and the boundaries of the dredge material placement areas from the Final Environmental Impact Statement (2019) is attached.

- a. The surveys should collect all position data with a minimum requirement of using higher level DGPS technologies or RTK GPS that provide sub-meter accuracy.
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 - iv. ESRI-compatible (ArcView 9.0+) shape files of bottom types identified in the survey area
 - v. Bathymetry figures and ESRI-compatible (ArcView 9.0+) shape file bottom contours
- e. The selected PI may be requested to attend 2 to 3, one hour long resource agency meetings which may be attended virtually.

4.0 GOVERNMENT FURNISHED MATERIALS OR PROPERTY

4.1 Physical Data:

The Galveston District shall provide access to any existing data, existing reports, recent studies, and any other information necessary to complete the objectives of this scope.

4.2 Equipment:

Government-furnished materials or property is governed by 2 C.F.R. Part 200.312 which states that a) Title to federally owned property remains vested in the Federal government. The non-Federal entity must submit annually an inventory listing of federally owned property in its custody to the Federal awarding agency. Upon completion of the Federal award or when the property is no longer needed, the non-Federal entity must return the property to the Federal awarding agency utilization.

5.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

12 months for administrative and technical support, from date of agreement award. There are no option periods.

6.0 COORDINATION

Greg Bonnell Project Manager Regional Planning and Environmental Center U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gregory.W.Bonnell@usace.army.mil Cell. (918) 951-0591

Project Technical POC: Jeff Pinsky Chief, Compliance Section Regional Planning and Environmental Center 2000 Fort Point Road Galveston, Texas 77550 Phone: (409) 2242013 Email: Jeffrey.f.pinsky@usace.army.mil

7.0 DELIVERABLES

Table 1. Deliverables Schedule

Deliverable	Schedule	Distribution
Monthly Teleconference	Monthly	To Technical POC and Product
Progress meetings and	-	Delivery Team
summary progress report:		
Final Report: Prepare and	Due 30 days prior to the	Submit both electronic and hard
submit final report with all	end of the period of	copies to the Project Technical
comments addressed.	performance.	POC. Submit electronic version
		only to USACE PM/GOTR

7.1 Progress Updates - Invoices for partial payment shall be submitted to coincide with receipt of the quarterly progress reports. No partial payment will be approved unless the government has received all progress reports.

7.2 Annual Inventory – Federally owned property - an annual inventory listing Federal property (to include description of the property, a serial number or other identification number) that is in the custody of the recipient; Copies to be sent to USACE – SWF, USACE GOTR and OASN POCs.

7.3 Annual Inventory – Acquired Property purchased with funding from award - property records must be maintained that includes description of the property, serial number or other identification number, source of funding, who holds title, acquisition date, cost of property, percentage of Federal participation in project costs, location, use and condition of property, and ultimate disposition including date of disposal and sale price. A physical inventory must be taken, and results reconciled every two years. Copies of the inventory to be sent annually to USACE – SWF, USACE GOTR and OASN POCs.

8.0 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 This cooperative agreement may be administered through a CESU only upon mutual agreement and official authorization by both parties of the acceptance of the application of the CESU Network IDC rate (17.5%).

8.2 Any resulting cooperative agreement will be subject to and recipient/cooperator shall comply with 2 CFR 200.313 "Equipment", 200.314 "Supplies", and 200.315 "Intangible Property" which includes use of research data.

[End of SOO]

[See below attachment]



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