Request for Statements of Interest
Funding Opportunity Announcement

Federal Awarding Agency:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Engineer Research and Development Center
3909 Halls Ferry Rd
Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199

Funding Opportunity No: W81EWF-22-SOI-0027

CFDA No: 12.630

Statutory Authority: 10 USC 4001

Program Title: Threatened and Endangered Fish Passage on the Alabama River

Announcement Type: Initial announcement

Issue Date: 21 June 2022

Statement of Interest/Qualifications Due Date: 21 July 2022 @ 1300 central time

Full Application Package Due Date, if Invited: 22 August 2022 @ 1300 central time

Estimated Award Ceiling: $1,000,000.00 for 2022

Estimated Total Program Funding (optional): $2,000,000.00 each year for an additional 4 years is anticipated; A total of $9,000,000.00 over 5 years is expected

Expected Number of Awards: The Government expects to issue a single award from this announcement.

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

Background:

Questions remain whether the operation of navigational lock chambers along the Alabama River helps large riverine fishes move upstream of dams and allow for their natural and historic long-distance migrations, most often for spawning. Species such as sturgeons (including the endangered Alabama sturgeon), paddlefish, and striped bass, as well as lesser known, nongame species like the southeastern blue sucker, smallmouth buffalo, and highfin carpsucker have historically migrated along Alabama's rivers.

Fisheries researchers tagged fish and installed an array of 19 receivers that spanned the distance from the Mobile Delta to the Cahaba River (including inside the lock chambers at Claiborne and Millers Ferry); these receivers automatically detect the signal of tagged fish that pass by them, allowing the researchers to follow fish movements. During preliminary research, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted daily special non-navigational lockages to allow fish the chance to move past the lock structures. This provided a large number of additional opportunities for fish to move into and through the lock chambers beyond the regular navigational operations of the locks. Preliminary research demonstrated that fish can and do enter lock chambers during these specialized lock operations, just as they can during regular navigational lockages. However, if lock operations are halted or reduced, then these opportunities for fishes to move upstream past the dams on their historic spawning migrations are eliminated, leading to a greatly reduced chance of fish moving upstream to spawn and eventual decline or elimination of the species.

New infrastructure is under consideration; however, questions about what type of infrastructure (bypass channel, fishway, fish lift for example) remain. It is unknown how infrastructure affect fish population impacts, passage further upstream, as well as impact on overall ecosystem health.

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:

Historically, fish made long distance migrations within the Alabama River. Current fish migrations are largely eliminated by dams, but there is potential, with proper mitigation, to reestablish migration and enhance ecological and economic benefits of the river. The goal of the project is to evaluate the fish movement at two locations in the Alabama River each with a different focus: Claiborne Lock and Dam and Montgomery Lock and Dam, each are USACE structure on the Alabama River.

At Claiborne Lock and Dam, information is needed on the ability of each approach to improve fish passage and what the follow-on population impacts might be. In addition, a wide range of potential species migrate in the Alabama River, and although ERDC has currently has 2D movement data for three species, movement data on additional species is required. These data should include new species across a range of possible sizes as field collection allows. Companion laboratory and numerical studies are envisioned to support field data collection.

At Montgomery Lock and Dam, no high resolution movement data for any species exist. In addition, Montgomery Lock and Dam also has an operating hydropower facility, which

possibly complicates fish movement and makes designing fish mitigation more difficult. New movement data, taking into account hydropower operations, is needed for all species including those already measured at Claiborne Lock and Dam. Companion laboratory and numerical studies are needed for Montgomery Lock and Dam. Partnerships with other universities working on locations in the Southeast and Mississippi River watershed with similar issues of locks and dams and fish migration are encouraged.

Public Benefit:

These studies will help ensure the preservation and protection of numerous threatened & endangered (T&E) and native fish species in the Alabama River. The problem is large, with many locks and dams across the Mississippi River and Southeast that have no mitigation for ecosystem impacts including fish. Moreover, developing conceptual and engineering tools for native fish will support understanding about invasive species and how infrastructure may be impacting the spread of invasives.

Section II: Award Information

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for studies to be sponsored by the Engineer Research and Development Center to provide field, laboratory and technical support for measuring fish movement near infrastructure. The estimated level of funding for FY22 is approximately $1,000,000. Further funding beyond FY22 of up to $2,000,000 per year is possible for a total of $9,000,000 over 5 years.

Government Involvement:

ERDC researchers will work cooperatively with the investigator to develop data needs and field protocols and will help make decisions on analytical methods and findings. An ERDC representative will be available for meetings with the investigator whenever necessary. Opportunities for student training at ERDC facilities exist. ERDC personnel will also be available to assist with all aspects of the research.

Section III: Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants – This opportunity is restricted to non-federal partners of the Gulf Coast Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU)

2. Cost Sharing – This action will be 100% funded by USACE.

Section IV: Application and Submission Information – Two Phase Process

Phase I: Submission of a Statement of Interest/Qualifications.

1. Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

    a. Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: phoebe.v.fuller@usace.army.mil
    (Maximum length: 2 pages, single-spaced 12 pt. font).

1. Name, Organization and Contact Information

2. Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
   - Biographical Sketch,
   - Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects,
   - Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise,
   - 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 proposed budget is NOT requested at this time.

The administrative point of contact is Specialist, phone number; phoebe.v.fuller@usace.army.mil

2. Statement of Interest/Qualifications shall be submitted NO LATER THAN 21 July 2022 @ 1300 central time.

Based on a review of the Statements of Interest received, an investigator or investigators will be invited to move to Phase II which is 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.

Phase II: Submission of a complete application package to include a full technical proposal including budget, if invited.

1. Address to Request Application Package

The complete funding opportunity announcement, application forms, and instructions are available for download at Grants.gov.

The administrative point of contact is Specialist, phone number; phoebe.v.fuller@usace.army.mil

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

All mandatory forms and any applicable optional forms must be completed in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below.

a. SF 424 R&R - Application for Federal Assistance
b. Full Technical Proposal – Discussion of the nature and scope of the

research and technical approach. Additional information on prior work in this area, descriptions of available equipment, data and facilities, and resumes of personnel who will be participating in this effort should also be included.

c. Cost Proposal/Budget – Clear, concise, and accurate cost proposals reflect the offeror's financial plan for accomplishing the effort contained in the technical proposal. As part of its cost proposal, the offeror shall submit cost element breakdowns in sufficient detail so that a reasonableness determination can be made. The SF 424 Research & Related Budget Form can be used as a guide but is required if the sub-recipient uses it. The cost breakdown should include the following, if applicable:
    1. Direct Labor: Direct labor should be detailed by level of effort (i.e. numbers of hours, etc.) of each labor category and the applicable labor rate. The source of labor rates shall be identified and verified. If rates are estimated, please provide the historical based used and clearly identify all escalation applied to derive the proposed rates.
    2. Fringe Benefit Rates: The source of fringe benefit rate shall be identified and verified.
    3. Travel: Travel costs must include a purpose and breakdown per trip to include destination, number of travelers, and duration.
    4. Materials/Equipment: List all material/equipment items by type and kind with associated costs and advise if the costs are based on vendor quotes and/or engineering estimates; provide copies of vendor quotes and/or catalog pricing data.
    5. Subrecipient costs: Submit all subrecipient proposals and analyses. Provide the method of selection used to determine the subrecipient.
    6. Tuition: Provide details and verification for any tuition amounts proposed.
    7. Indirect Costs: Currently the negotiated indirect rate for awards through the CESU is 17.5%.
    8. Any other proposed costs: The source should be identified and verified.

3. Application package shall be submitted NO LATER THAN 22 August 2022 @ 1300 central time.

4. Submission Instructions

Applications may be submitted by e-mail, or Grants.gov. Choose ONE of the following submission methods:

a. E-mail:
Format all documents to print on Letter (8 ½ x 11") paper. E-mail proposal to phoebe.v.fuller@usace.army.mil

b. Grants.gov: https://www.grants.gov/:
Applicants are not required to submit proposals through Grants.gov. However, if applications are submitted via the internet, applicants are responsible for ensuring that their Grants.gov proposal submission is received in its entirety.

All applicants choosing to use Grants.gov to submit proposals must be registered and have and account with Grants.gov. It may take up to three weeks to complete Grants.gov registration. For more information on registration, go to https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html.

Section V: Application Review Information

1. **Peer or Scientific Review Criteria:** In accordance with DoDGARs 22.315(c), an impartial peer review will be conducted. Subject to funding availability, all proposals will be reviewed using the criteria listed below (technical and cost/price). All proposals will be evaluated under the following two criteria which are of descending importance.

a. **Technical (items i. and ii. are of equal importance):**

i. Technical merits of proposed R&D.

ii. Potential relationship of proposed R&D to DoD missions.

b. **Cost/Price:** Overall realism of the proposed costs will be evaluated.

2. **Review and Selection Process**

a. **Categories:** Based on the Peer or Scientific Review, proposals will be categorized as Selectable or Not Selectable (see definitions below). The selection of the source for award will be based on the Peer or Scientific Review, as well as importance to agency programs and funding availability.

i. **Selectable:** Proposals are recommended for acceptance if sufficient funding is available.

ii. **Not Selectable:** Even if sufficient funding existed, the proposal should not be funded.

Note: The Government reserves the right to award some, all, or none of proposals. When the Government elects to award only a part of a proposal, the selected part may be categorized as Selectable, though the proposal as a whole may not merit such a categorization.

b. No other criteria will be used.

c. Prior to award of a potentially successful offer, the Grants Officer will make a determination regarding price reasonableness.

Section VI: Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

   Written notice of award will be given in conjunction with issuance of a cooperative agreement signed by a Grants Officer. The cooperative agreement will contain the effective date of the agreement, the period of performance, funding information, and all terms and conditions. The recipient is required to sign and return the document before work under the agreement commences. **Work described in this announcement SHALL NOT begin without prior authorization from a Grants Officer.**

2. Administrative Requirements

   The cooperative agreement issued as a result of this announcement is subject to the administrative requirements in 2 CFR Subtitle A; 2 CFR Subtitle B, Ch. XI, Part 1103; and 32 CFR Subchapter C, except Parts 32 and 33.

3. Reporting

   See 2 CFR Sections 200.327 for financial reporting requirements,

   200.328 for performance reporting requirements, and 200.329 for real property reporting requirements.

Section VII: Agency Contact

Phoebe Fuller, Grants Specialist

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