



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

GOMA's 2021 Gulf Star Program: Impacts of the Persistent Brown Tide Algal Blooms and Water Quality Degradation on the Economy of Communities that Rely on Baffin Bay-Upper Laguna Madre (Texas)

Deadline for proposal submission: **July 9th, 2021**

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) is a partnership of the five Gulf States, federal agencies, academic organizations, businesses, and other non-profits in the region. Our goal is to significantly increase regional collaboration to enhance the environmental and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. For more information about the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and the Gulf Star program visit www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org.

BACKGROUND

Gulf Star is a public-private partnership administered by GOMA. Gulf Star partners are agencies, businesses, and private organizations that provide funding for regional projects identified by GOMA Priority Issue Teams. The purpose of the Gulf Star program is to support foundational projects related to loss of critical habitats, coastal resilience, water resources, living marine resources, environmental education, and data/monitoring. These priorities are detailed in GOMA's 2016 [*Governors' Action Plan III for Healthy and Resilient Coasts*](#).

GOMA's Water Resources Team focuses its efforts on a wide range of water resource concerns affecting the region, including pathogens, harmful algal blooms, nutrient pollution, hypoxia, freshwater inflows, water resource sustainability, and other emerging issues. The Team works to identify, prioritize, and pursue additional data and research related to human, aquatic, and economic health and to protect and improve water resources in the Gulf of Mexico. Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), funding from the Gulf Star program is available to the Water Resources Team to address economic impacts associated with prevalent water quality issues in the Gulf region.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND SCOPE OF WORK

Recognizing the need to provide relevant, up-to-date information to state and federal agencies and other stakeholders, GOMA's Water Resources Team seeks proposals to collect, synthesize, and share information regarding the economic impacts of water quality degradation and harmful algal blooms (HABs) on industry sectors such as tourism, commercial and recreational fisheries, hotels/bed and breakfasts, and seafood restaurants. This is a timely topic of interest to state and federal partners,

industry and businesses, and many other groups across the region. Specifically, GOMA's Water Resources Team seeks to fund a project that will address synthesis of available data and information regarding:

- the economic impacts of the water quality degradation that has occurred over the past 3 decades in Baffin Bay-Upper Laguna Madre, Texas, including but not limited to the persistent recurring brown tide algal blooms;
- the social consequences of HABs for people and local municipalities; and
- socio-economic drivers of the water quality degradation.

Relevant economic data sources that should be assessed include those related to seafood, tourism (hotels/bed and breakfasts, restaurants, fishing guide charters, etc.), commercial fish landings, fisherman income, small businesses, and local municipalities. Data sources may be obtained from leaders of impacted sectors, the Baffin Bay Stakeholder Group, and relevant state agencies such as Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Travel Texas, Texas Real Estate Commission, Texas Workforce Commission, and Texas Economic Development.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Project deliverables should include:

- 1) A report that includes a data synthesis of the economic impacts of long-term water quality degradation and recurring, persistent brown tide algal blooms in the Baffin Bay-Upper Laguna Madre ecosystem; social consequences of HABs for people and local municipalities; and recommendations to the Baffin Bay Stakeholder Group, agencies, and policy makers for restoration investments and other potential actions to minimize negative impacts to the economy.
- 2) At least one presentation (in person or virtual) for the Baffin Bay Stakeholder Group and one presentation to the GOMA Water Resources Team to learn about the results of this project.

AWARD DETAILS

Grant award agreements and payments will come directly from the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. Available funding for the project selected from this RFP is approximately \$45,000, so project proposals should not exceed that value. Minimum award value is \$25,000; proposals for less than \$25,000 will not be considered.

Although project costs cannot include already-incurred costs, projects may include funding for continuation or expansion of existing projects. Cost sharing or matching is not required, but is viewed favorably.

Project duration can be no more than 12 months. Anticipated start date is August 2nd, 2021.

ELIGIBILITY

Any state or municipal agency, academic/research institution, tribe, business, or non-governmental organization is eligible to submit a proposal and be considered for funding under this RFP. Applicants of winning proposals will be required to attend the 2021 GOMA Mid-year Meeting in Biloxi, MS or the 2022 Gulf of Mexico Conference (GOMA All Hands Meeting) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, provide regular

project updates, and submit semi-annual progress reports to the Water Resources Team.

Applicants must be U.S. organizations or corporations with a valid tax ID number and will be required to certify that they have the institutional, managerial, and financial capability to ensure proper planning, management, and completion of the project described in the scope; will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain; will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval from the Gulf of Mexico Alliance; and will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing this project.

PROPOSAL CONTENT AND FORMAT

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to Ali Robertson, GOMA Program Manager, at ali.robertson@gomxa.org by **Friday, July 9th, 2021**. Proposals must be submitted using the GOMA Proposal Form that requires three main sections as described below:

(1) Title Page (GOMA fillable PDF form)

(2) Project Description and Budget (GOMA fillable PDF form; 5 page maximum)

GOMA's Proposal Form requires that the Project Description and Budget be no longer than 5 pages and should contain the following elements:

Project Description:

In a clear and concise manner, describe what will be accomplished during the project:

- project goals and objectives, methods or approach, and team members
- primary activities that will be accomplished with this grant and the schedule for implementation
- Outreach/Engagement – stakeholders or users of the results of the project and describe the steps that will be taken to transfer the results of the project to the appropriate audience
- Data and Information Sharing - describe how all relevant project-derived material (data, metadata, reports, products, etc.) will be publicly available by the completion of the project.

Budget:

- Project Cost Details: Salary, Fringe, Travel, Supplies, Equipment, Contractual, Indirect
- Travel must include funds to attend the 2021 GOMA Mid-year Meeting in Biloxi, MS or the 2022 Gulf of Mexico Conference (GOMA All Hands Meeting) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (specific venue location still to be determined)
- Indirect is limited to 10% of the total amount requested
- Justification should be provided for each applicable cost category

(3) Attachments (as appropriate)

Background information or other relevant information can be provided as an attachment. A Letter of Commitment is required for project team members from organizations other than that of the applicant's. Commitment letters should be attached as PDF to proposals. Attachments are not included in 5-page limit for the Project Description and Budget.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Project proposals will be evaluated by members of the GOMA staff and GOMA Water Resources Team. Proposals will be evaluated on: rationale (10 points), proposal merit (10 points), impacts and application of results (10 points), applicant (10 points), outreach and engagement and/or data sharing (5 points), and proposal specifications (5 points).

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Rationale (10 points) – Project addresses objectives identified in the GOMA Action Plan III; clearly states the need for the project and the high primacy in accomplishing the Priority Issue Team’s actions.
2. Proposal Merit (10 points) – Project assesses whether the goals and objectives are clear and the methodology is appropriate for the proposed project. Likelihood that the proposed project will attain the stated objectives and action identified in the GOMA Action Plan III.
3. Impacts and Application of Results (10 points) – Project evaluates the overall impact and anticipated outcomes of the completed project. Identifies opportunities for leveraging or complimentary projects (if any).
4. Applicant (10 points) – Principle Investigator and applicant team is well qualified to perform the proposed work and demonstrates intent to be active on GOMA Team(s) throughout the life of the project. Project lead and other project team members are experienced and have proper expertise to perform the project.
5. Outreach and Engagement and/or Data Sharing (5 points) – Applicant addressed the Outreach and Engagement and Data Sharing requirements satisfactorily.
6. Proposal Specifications (5 points) – Proposal is limited to 5 pages and contains all information required by the RFP. Budget costs are reasonable and justifiable.

SUBMITTAL, SELECTION, AND NOTIFICATION

Proposals must be submitted by email to Ali Robertson, GOMA Program Manager, at ali.robertson@gomxa.org by Friday, July 9th, 2021.

Proposals will be evaluated by GOMA staff and the Water Resources Team. The evaluation committee will be composed of subject matter experts (who will remain anonymous). The Team will submit their recommendation to the GOMA Alliance Management Team who makes the final selection regarding funding of the project. The GOMA Alliance Management Team reserves the right to make selections based on the evaluation criteria and their own deliberations.

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance will notify the applicants of their award status in July and the project start date should be planned for August 2nd, 2021.

QUESTIONS

For questions about this RFP, please contact Ali Robertson, GOMA Program Manager, ali.robertson@gomxa.org

No questions will be allowed after the submission deadline during the evaluation process.