



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2017 Gulf Star Grants Program

Deadline for proposal submission: **September 1, 2017**

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 partnership visit www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org.

PURPOSE

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 quantity and quality, living marine resources, environmental education, and data/monitoring. Those priorities are reflected in GOMA's 2016 [*Governors' Action Plan III for Healthy and Resilient Coasts*](#).

GOMA addresses the priorities through six Priority Issue Teams: Coastal Resilience; Data and Monitoring; Education and Engagement; Habitat Resources; Water Resources; and Wildlife and Fisheries. The Teams focus on these issues and develop specific actions through a collaborative approach with scientific, technical, and resource management experts from across the region. Priority Issue Teams also cooperate on three Cross-Team Initiatives: Ecosystem Services Assessment; Marine Debris; and Conservation, Restoration, and Resilience Planning. These initiatives allow teams to leverage expertise and resources beyond their own issues to produce positive results.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Available funds for projects selected from this RFP are approximately \$495,000. GOMA seeks project proposals that will address specific priorities with the specifications listed below.

Coastal Resilience

GOMA's Coastal Resilience Team focuses on our regional ability to respond to natural and manmade hazards, including risk communication techniques, resilience assessments, and coastal adaptation and planning methods. The Team is developing strategies and tools that, when implemented, can create safer, more resilient communities.



The Coastal Resilience Team seeks to fund one to two (1-2) projects within the following focus areas:

- Conduct resilience workshops across the Gulf states, targeting local government representatives and land use managers, teaching them how to access coastal hazard and climate change information/tools and how to apply the information to community planning and resource management.
- Develop case studies on lessons learned or best practices for resilience, adaptation, or restoration planning for each Gulf State and communicate same.
- Develop and promote tools to help audiences identify opportunities to improve resilience.

Maximum Award Value: \$60,000

For questions about Coastal Resilience Team projects, contact Daphne Viverette at daphne.viverette@dmr.ms.gov.

Data and Monitoring

GOMA's Data and Monitoring Team provides guidance for the coordination of monitoring efforts to discover, use, and preserve data in support of decision making for Alliance priorities. The Team is focused on improving the comparability of data, developing a community of monitoring practitioners, and establishing a framework for improving how data and information are delivered to coastal managers and the public.

The Data and Monitoring Team seeks to fund project(s) with a focus on developing an overarching, transparent, and participatory mapping framework of habitat and/or water quality data that supports state information needs for resource management. Multi-state partnerships are encouraged. Proposed projects should include:

- inventory of habitat and/or water quality data currently mapped including type, classification standard, class, products, and metadata;
- development of a process for displaying spatial information or use of an existing framework/platform;
- enable shared use of collected data;
- scale (single or multi-state);
- long-term data management plan, inventory maintenance/updates, and information sharing over time; and
- identified gaps in coverage based on habitat and/or water quality.

Maximum Award Value: \$115,000

For questions about Data and Monitoring Team projects, contact Elyssa Finkelstein at elyssa.finkelstein@dep.state.fl.us.

Ecosystem Services Assessment Cross-Team Initiative

GOMA's Ecosystem Services Assessment Cross-Team Initiative works to advance the identification, measurement, and communication of coastal and marine ecosystem goods and services for better management of regional resources and the building of resilient communities.

This Cross-Team Initiative seeks to fund one (1) project with a focus on associating ecosystem service and socioeconomic indicators of natural or nature-based features and green infrastructure with



coastal community resilience. Project outcome(s) should promote the preservation and restoration of natural ecosystem functions and resources of coastal areas. Proposed projects should address one or more of the following:

- Identify and determine feasibility of indicators.
- Establish criteria and monitoring justification.
- Develop an online toolbox and/or guidance document to aid communities in selection of appropriate applications.
- Deliver project results to coastal communities through webinars and/or workshops.

Maximum Award Value: \$75,000

For questions about the Ecosystem Services Assessment Cross-Team project, contact Becky Allee at Becky.Alee@noaa.gov.

Education and Engagement

GOMA's Education and Engagement Team focuses on providing support to the other five priorities and three cross-team initiatives. Members use a broad spectrum of environmental education approaches to expand environmental literacy and stewardship. The Team is committed to engagement that leverages resources, builds partnerships, and results in measurable impacts.

The Education and Engagement Team seeks to fund one (1) project with a focus on creating a STEM workforce development program related to one or more of the following issues: coastal resilience, data and monitoring, habitat resources, water quality and/or quantity, or wildlife and fisheries. The proposed project should:

- include skill training, mentoring, and professional certification in a STEM field;
- be an in-school youth program, an out of school youth program, or a combination of both located in one of the five Gulf states; and
- engage minority, under-represented, and underserved, at risk youth.

Maximum Award Value: \$45,000

For questions about the Education and Engagement Team project, contact Lee Yokel at lyokel@disl.org.

Water Resources

GOMA's Water Resources Team focuses its efforts on a wide range of key water resource concerns affecting the region. These include: 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 protect and improve water resources in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Water Resources Team seeks to fund one to three (1-3) projects focused on one of the following focus areas:

- Assist local communities in:
 - initiating, enhancing, or expanding volunteer water quality monitoring programs;
 - addressing water quality issues (nutrient enrichment/eutrophication, pathogens, Harmful Algal Blooms, *Vibrio vulnificus*, etc.); or



- implementing education programs about a local water quality issue.
- Pilot projects to expand/enhance methods or technologies related to identifying, monitoring, and predicting Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), their toxins, or impacts.
- Pilot projects to reduce pollutant loads (nitrogen, phosphorus, pathogens, sediment, etc.).
- Enhance existing projects that examine nutrient loading, to increase awareness and impact of Nutrient Reduction Strategies for states (nutrient/hypoxia monitoring, changing land use patterns, economic impact studies, nutrient load changes related to policy implementation, etc.).

Partnerships and collaboration at the local, state, regional, federal, and international level are strongly encouraged.

Maximum Award Value: \$100,000

For questions about Water Resources Team projects, contact Kim Caviness at kim_caviness@deq.state.ms.us.

Wildlife and Fisheries

GOMA's Wildlife and Fisheries Team focuses on identifying gaps in existing research and restoration efforts; works with other Teams to integrate wildlife and fisheries data, information, and priorities; and coordinates and supports regional efforts to protect and conserve wildlife and fisheries. Members work to inform conservation policy through regional collaboration.

The Wildlife and Fisheries Team seeks to fund one to three (1-3) projects focused on one of the following focus areas:

- Identify and catalog key beach nesting and foraging areas for species of concern (i.e. seabirds, sea turtles, diamondback terrapins, beach mice, and piping plovers).
- Quantify/catalog species use of oyster reefs Gulf-wide.
- Develop habitat/species linkages for coastal marine habitats.

Maximum Award Value: \$100,000

For questions about the Wildlife and Fisheries Team projects, contact Mark Lingo at mark.lingo@tpwd.texas.gov.

AWARD DETAILS

Grant award agreements and payments will come directly from the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. Available funds for projects selected from this RFP are approximately \$495,000. Maximum award values vary by Priority Issue Team and are specified above; however, minimum award value is \$25,000. (Proposal 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 24 months. Anticipated start date is January 1, 2018.



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 must be active (or intend to become active) GOMA Priority Issue Team members and will be required to attend 2018 and 2019 GOMA All Hands meetings, provide regular project updates, and submit semi-annual progress reports to the 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.

OUTREACH/ENGAGEMENT

Proposals must identify specific stakeholders or users of the proposed project’s deliverables and identify how to communicate the project outcomes to them.

DATA AND INFORMATION SHARING

All relevant project-derived material (data, metadata, reports, products, etc.) must be publicly available by the completion of the project. Project leads are encouraged to consult with the GOMA Data and Monitoring Team to determine appropriate data discovery, access, dissemination, and archival measures. It is recommended that related project metadata are entered into the GOMAportal (www.GOMAportal.org), but other publicly available systems are acceptable as well. Data and Monitoring Team point of contact is Elyssa Finkelstein at elyssa.finkelstein@dep.state.fl.us.

PROPOSAL CONTENT AND FORMAT

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to Christina Mohrman, GOMA Program Coordinator, at christina.mohrman@gomxa.org by **Friday, September 1**. 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 pages 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 2018 GOMA All Hands Meeting in Florida and 2019 GOMA All Hands Meeting in Alabama
- 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

Projects 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 Priority Issue Tier II action it proposes to address.
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/applicant organization 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 Christina Mohrman, GOMA Program Coordinator, at christina.mohrman@gomxa.org by September 1, 2017.

Proposals will be evaluated by GOMA Priority Issue Teams. The evaluation committee will be composed of subject matter experts (who will remain anonymous) selected by GOMA Priority Issue Team coordinators and/or steering committees. Teams will submit their recommendations to the GOMA Alliance Management Team who makes the final selection regarding funding of the projects. 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 mid-October, 2017. Project start date is planned for January 1, 2018.

QUESTIONS

Questions regarding priority issues should be directed to the point of contact for the specific Priority Issue Team (noted above). For questions about the proposal format or submission process, please contact Christina Mohrman, GOMA Program Coordinator, at christina.mohrman@gomxa.org.

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