



FLRACEP REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: FLRACEP-2019-01.5

FLRACEP RFP III.5 – Facilitating Development of a Standardized Mapping Framework

The Florida RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Program is issuing a Request for Proposals to establish a (single) West Florida Shelf Standardized Mapping Framework Center of Excellence. The selected Center of Excellence will facilitate a collaborative effort to develop a framework for aggregating benthic habitat data on the West Florida Shelf.

West Florida Shelf Standardized Mapping Framework Center of Excellence

Timeline: 24-36 months*

One possible CoE award

*note that the successful applicant could be eligible for up to ten additional years of funding to implement the framework in the Gulf of Mexico, depending on Program Management Team approval, satisfactory completion of the initial scope of work, available funding, and other factors

Available funding: \$350,000

Key Deadlines

- RFP III.5 Release date: November 12, 2019
- Informational webinar: November 19, 2019, 3-4pm (details below)
- LOIs are due December 11, 2019 at 5pm eastern time
- LOI feedback will be sent by December 16, 2019 and consist of: Encouraged, Highly Encouraged, or Discouraged from submitting a full proposal
- Any applicant submitting a LOI may submit a full proposal, regardless of the feedback received
- Full proposals are due February 10, 2020 at 5pm eastern time
- SRP review February 10-Feb 21, 2020
- PMT review February 10-Feb 28, 2020
- PMT decision early March 2020

Purpose

To build a process for and get community agreement on a framework to support effective and dynamic aggregation of current and future benthic mapping data.

Informational Webinar

November 19, 2019, 3-4pm. Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/401401541> Access Code: 401-401-541

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: [+1 \(646\) 749-3112](tel:+16467493112)

Background

The challenge of collecting, standardizing, aggregating, maintaining, and sharing historic and current spatial habitat data is a major impediment to achieving maximum impact and return on investment from Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) resource management and restoration efforts. Currently, standardized aggregated (synthesizing data from different sources into the same place) spatial habitat data is not readily available to those that need it. Existing data compilation efforts have made strides in supporting data discovery, but they are not aggregated and standardized (e.g., classification scheme, resolution, format, etc.). It takes considerable effort for users to find, understand, standardize, assemble, and employ the required spatial information to support user needs. And given the dynamic nature of habitats, spatial data sets that are compiled from these resources for a given project have a short life-span.

The ultimate vision is for standardized data flowing from multiple sources across multiple sites to be aggregated dynamically and used repeatedly by anyone. Such a data framework would collectively save thousands of hours of time spent by those manually compiling data from scattered sources. This opportunity seeks to support this vision by funding the facilitation of a process to get agreement across the many entities interested in mapping on the standards necessary for such a system.

Funding opportunity

FLRACEP is soliciting proposals for a Center of Excellence to facilitate development of a data standardization framework to align the classification, resolution, and formatting of benthic data collected on the West Florida Shelf (WFS). We envision multiple interactions that require face to face meetings with different parties to get alignment and agreement. Ultimately, multiple layers/maps might be required for different themes, so community agreement on standardization is critical. The overall objective of the framework is to lay the foundation for a system (could be a combined technical, community, and business rules solution) that allows multiple mapping stakeholders to contribute to a single, seamless, integrated map in the future.

This funding is an opportunity to change how we do the business of mapping the shelf (current and future), and thus the purpose is to facilitate a process that is absent and sorely needed. The key to successfully changing the status quo is agreement across the many data providers and product users.

Thus, the purpose of this funding is to build a process for – and get community agreement on – a framework to support effective and dynamic aggregation of current and future benthic mapping data.

FLRACEP is seeking proposals for a Center of Excellence that will serve as a collaboration hub for state, federal, academic, and other partners in order to generate a framework for integrating various existing mapping efforts into a single, continuous benthic map for the West Florida Shelf AND support the seamless addition of new or updated information. The WFS geographic area of interest covers the entire Gulf portion of Florida spanning from the shoreline out to 200 m water depth but is not expected to include inland bays and estuaries. At present, mapping in this region is conducted piecemeal using a wide range of sensors, mapping methods, and classification schemes.

This framework should demonstrate that collaborators are familiar with and draw on examples from similar exercises beyond the Gulf. Applicants must also demonstrate commitment from a state or federal entity capable of and eager to provide long-term data housing, public availability, and upkeep. A letter of support from the state or federal agency must accompany all applications.

Several programs in the Gulf of Mexico have identified mapping standards and connecting existing mapping data as a priority (FCMaP, GOMA Master Mapping Plan, Texas mapping efforts, NOAA, USGS, BOEM, etc). While the focus of this award is specifically on the West Florida Shelf, the framework should be expandable to the entire Gulf of Mexico, and preference will be given to proposals that include partners and plans that enable this expansion

Proposals should specifically address how the project will culminate in a final product that describes the framework and prescribes steps for future users to produce a new dynamic map that fits in seamlessly into the framework and our understanding of the WFS. This is a critical element of ensuring the long-term utility of the project.

Proposals for Centers of Excellence funding will be assessed on:

1. Collaboration with existing state, federal, academic and other mapping partners, and stakeholders;
2. Viability of the plan/process to achieve consensus on data standardization framework (i.e. the workplan has a high likelihood of success);
3. Technical qualifications of the proposed project team and their ability to overcome the challenges associated with this collaborative work;
4. Sufficient detail on process, potential partners, and likely participants:
 - a. Clearly articulated purpose and need,
 - b. Process to identify and collaborate with data providers and users (this might entail draft meeting agendas, plans to reach-back to participants, etc.)
 - c. Budgets that provide a detailed account of any referenced workshops and sufficient support for the proposed meetings, stakeholder reach back, etc.
5. Utility of the proposed final product in providing an effective roadmap for how we allow for multiple contributors to a single, central mapping effort.

Future Funding

The successful applicant could be eligible for up to ten additional years of funding to implement the framework in the Gulf of Mexico, depending on Program Management Team approval, satisfactory completion of the initial scope of work, available funding, and other factors.

Pre-Proposal Letter of Intent Requirements

All applicants are required to submit a pre-proposal Letter of Intent (LOI) not to exceed three pages single-sided using 12-point font. Each LOI must include a title page that will NOT count toward the 3-page limit. The title page should include the title of the proposal, a list of any co-PIs, and PI contact information: name, title, affiliation, mailing address, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and web page (if any).

The LOI should clearly articulate a problem statement, methods to address the issue, anticipated outcomes, project timeline, and a budget (including any matching funds). The 3-page limit for the LOI includes literature cited, photos, pictures, graphs, figures, and all supporting information (except for the 2-page CV). Applicants should submit a brief CV (2 pages or less) for the PI as an appendix to their LOI.

Key Deadlines

- LOIs are due December 11, 2019 at 5pm eastern time
- LOI feedback will be sent by December 16, 2019 and consist of: Encouraged, Highly Encouraged, or Discouraged from submitting a full proposal
- Any applicant submitting a LOI may submit a full proposal, regardless of the feedback received
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Eligible Entities

FLRACEP grants may only be awarded to a Florida-based (i.e. headquartered and primarily operating in Florida) non-governmental public or private institution of higher education (lead PI from same) or other not-for-profit institution. The Florida-based headquarters must primarily operate in Florida in the area of ocean and coastal research, support an established infrastructure capable of receiving and administering a federal grant, and have a history of successful grant management. NGOs with national headquarters elsewhere may utilize their Florida offices that meet these conditions.

Full Proposal Requirements

The body of the proposal **must not exceed ten pages**, single-sided using 10- or 12-point font, exclusive of cover page, bibliography, budget pages, curricula vitae, and supporting materials.

Cover Page (limit 1 page)

- **Title:** The full title of the proposal.
- **Principal Investigator (PI):** Please list only one (corresponding) principal investigator.
- **PI Contact Information:** Affiliation, address, phone, website, and e-mail for the principal investigator.
- **Financial Point of Contact (POC):** An individual within the institution responsible for contractual and fiscal matters.
- **Financial POC Information:** Address, phone, and e-mail.

Proposal Body (limit 10 pages)

- **Abstract:** Provide an abstract summarizing the project. Please limit to 300 words.
- **Introduction, Background, or Problem Statement:** Provide a brief review of the specific problem or question(s) this proposal is seeking to address and any past or related efforts by the research team or others. Indicate knowledge gaps, shortfalls of prior efforts, successes in other regions, etc. and describe how the applicant(s) will incorporate this information into the proposed work.

- **Goals and Objectives:** Provide clear statements of both the general or broad goal of the proposed project and the specific objectives that will be addressed within the scope of this proposal to make progress toward that goal. Provide a discussion of the importance or significance of the project, and how it relates to addressing the stated problem.
- **Methods:** Provide a detailed description of the methods, including a detailed timeline of activities.
- **Data Management:** Provide a description of data management, storage, sharing, and dissemination plan.
- **Anticipated Outcomes:** Describe the short-term outcomes anticipated to occur within the scope of effort and time span of the proposed project (e.g. completion of a project strategy, publication of a science framework, regional workshops, one or more peer-reviewed journal articles, etc. and how these support advancement of GOM mapping.
- **Application:** Describe the anticipated long-term utility of the project, its implications for future research, management, or conservation activities, and how the proposed project will support such activities. Be as specific as possible as to the entity or agency expected to use the outputs of this work.

Budget and Time Line

This section should provide a detailed narrative and follow the categories from the required FLRACEP annual budget sheet as well as clearly link spending to different objectives or tasks from the proposal body. Applications must include a schedule, timeline, and milestone chart in this section.

Curricula Vitae, Research Team Qualifications (limit 2 pages each CV)

Provide a curriculum vitae or short biography **of no more than two pages** for each of the key members of the proposal team (those individuals whose background and experience are essential to completion of the project), including their experience or expertise related to the subject proposal. Although there can be only one corresponding principal investigator, multiple co-investigators can be included in this portion of the proposal, if desired.

Submission Procedure and Review Timelines

Please review the FLRACEP Rules and Policies document for all programmatic requirements before submitting an application. Pre-proposal LOIs and proposals should be submitted electronically in Adobe PDF format to the FLRACEP program team at flracep@usf.edu.

- Full proposals are due February 10, 2020 at 5pm eastern time
- SRP review February 10-Feb 21, 2020
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Policy on Indirect Costs

Due to the limited funding available, FLRACEP limits indirect costs for all Centers of Excellence research grants and contracts to ten percent of the direct costs, and IDC may not be charged on either tuition or shiptime.

Geographic Extent

As required by the RESTORE Act, field efforts must be located in the Gulf Coast Region (as defined at 31 C.F.R. §34.2), which includes oceans and coasts off coastal counties that border the Gulf of Mexico, from 25 nm inland from the coastline to the offshore boundary of the Exclusive Economic Zone.