Requesting Organization:
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 15th Street NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Contact Information:
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Application Deadline: Thursday, May 19, 2016

OVERVIEW
The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified independent Contractor to support the development and initial implementation of the Gulf of Mexico Pelagic Longline Bycatch Reduction Program (PLL Program). The PLL Project is supported through a partnership between NFWF and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The successful Offeror will be selected through a competitive process that assesses the Offeror’s plan for achieving stated work items, technical qualifications, and cost considerations. The award level will be based on the Foundation’s evaluation of the proposal and budget documentation.

The Contract Period of Performance is estimated to be 12 months. At NFWF option, the contract may be extended for an additional year, subject to mutual agreement of the Scope of Work and cost. Location is negotiable, but there is a strong preference for the selected Contractor to be based in the Gulf of Mexico region. The selected Contractor must have the ability to start immediately (within 1 week of offer), with an ability and willingness to travel.

BACKGROUND
In 2016, the natural resource Trustees for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill finalized a comprehensive restoration plan for the Gulf of Mexico that includes a settlement of up to $8.8 billion in order to resolve claims for natural resource damages related to the spill¹. Initial research and injury assessments indicated injury to various pelagic fish species as a result of the spill, and therefore the Trustees proposed the PLL Program through the Phase IV Early Restoration process to compensate for injuries incurred by these species. The PLL Program was one of ten projects included in the Deepwater Horizon Final Phase IV Early Restoration Program.

¹ Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: Final Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Available online: www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-planning/gulf-plan/
Plan and Environmental Assessment released in September 2015.

The PLL Program aims to restore pelagic fish biomass through reductions in incidental bycatch in the Gulf of Mexico pelagic longline fishery. The pelagic longline fishery in the Gulf of Mexico primarily targets yellowfin tuna and swordfish, but incidentally catches and discards non-target species such as marlin, sharks, and bluefin tuna. This program aims to reduce mortality associated with bycatch and regulatory discards through two integrated actions. First, the PLL Program will establish a voluntary annual 6-month repose period to coincide with the bluefin tuna spawning season. During the voluntary repose participating fishers will be compensated for refraining from all fishing activity using pelagic longline gear. Second, the program will provide participating fishers with two alternative gear types (greensticks and buoy gear), which can be used to harvest yellowfin tuna and swordfish during the repose period in lieu of pelagic longline gear. The first repose period under the PLL Program will be implemented in 2017, and the program is expected to continue over the next 6-10 years.

This integrated strategy provides for direct benefits to pelagic species through the repose period, while continuing to support local economies through the use of alternative fishing gear. In addition, the PLL Program aims to build on NFWF’s investments in the Gulf of Mexico regarding the use of alternative gear types. Alternative gears, such as greensticks and buoy gear, have proven effective at reducing bycatch; however, additional testing and refinement is needed to increase the efficiency of these alternative gear types in catching target species. The PLL Program at-large will support continued testing and refinement of these alternative gear methods.

The selected Contractor will coordinate and assist in the development, management, and initial scoping phases of the PLL Program. The selected Contractor will work closely with, and coordinate among, NFWF and NOAA staff, as well as additional contractors as needed.

QUALIFICATIONS SOUGHT
To coordinate the development and initial scope of the PLL Program, this RFQ is seeking a qualified entity to serve as an independent contractor to NFWF.

- Advanced degree or equivalent experience with concentration in fisheries ecology, conservation science, or environmental policy preferred.
- Three to five years’ experience working with government agencies and/or nongovernmental organizations on issues related to fisheries conservation and natural resource management.
- Knowledge of the pelagic longline fishery in the Gulf of Mexico preferred.
- Experience negotiating and executing contracts, or similar types of agreements.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Ability to effectively communicate technical information to a general audience
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Experience building consensus and managing conflict among diverse partners.
- Ability to work independently in a rapidly changing environment.

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• Computer proficiency, including databases, spreadsheets, word processing, and graphics. Experience with web content management is preferred.

SCOPE OF WORK
The selected Contractor will work closely with, and coordinate among, NFWF and NOAA staff, as well as additional contractors as needed. Specific tasks will include, but are not limited to:

Task 1: Coordinate refinement and initial execution of the program implementation plan. The selected Contractor will provide technical, logistical, and managerial support to effectively refine and coordinate the initial planning phases of the program implementation plan. The activities included in this contract will support program planning and lay the necessary groundwork to successfully facilitate the longer-term execution of the program. The selected Contractor will work closely with, and coordinate among, NFWF and NOAA staff, as well as additional contractors as needed.

Task 2: Conduct market research to identify vendors for alternative gear procurement, installation, and training. The PLL Program will encourage participating fishers to use alternative fishing gear types (e.g., greenstick gear and swordfish buoy gear). The selected Contractor will identify potential vendors and gather price estimates for gear procurement, installation, and training.

Task 3: Develop and maintain a program website. The selected Contractor will develop content for a new, NFWF hosted, PLL Program webpage. The selected Contractor will develop and update content for the webpage in coordination with NFWF and NOAA staff.

Task 4: Develop plans and documents to support program implementation. In close coordination with NFWF and NOAA staff, the selected Contractor will develop plans and documents associated with program implementation. This may include, but is not limited to, the development of a communications plan or strategy, drafting participant application solicitations and forms, and developing agreement terms and conditions for participating fishers.

Task 5: Support the planning and coordination of an open application period to solicit eligible fishers to participate in the program. The PLL Program aims to solicit applications from fishers interested in participating in the repose period starting in 2017. Therefore, the selected Contractor will facilitate the planning, coordination, and execution of an open application period in 2016.

Task 6: Facilitate effective and frequent communication with fishing industry stakeholders in the Gulf of Mexico. The program will require regular communication with fishermen, dealers, and other stakeholders to ensure the industry is properly engaged and well informed throughout program development and implementation. Additionally, the selected Contractor will coordinate and work directly with NFWF and NOAA staff to facilitate project implementation and effective stakeholder communication.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS
1. Address each item in the “Application Criteria” below.
2. Offeror must limit the application to a maximum of four (4) pages, minimizing the use of supplementary materials.
3. Proposals must be submitted electronically as an email attachment to Kristen Byler (Kristen.Byler@nfwf.org), using the following subject line with submission: Response to RFQ for PLL Program Coordinator – [name of respondent]. Statements must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF. Budgets should be attached as an Excel worksheet using the template provided (Budget Template).

4. Offers must be e-mailed no later than 11:59 PM EDT on Thursday, May 19.

5. All questions should be submitted via email to Kristen Byler (Kristen.Byler@nfwf.org). NFWF will respond to all Offerors at the same time and with the same answers. In order to provide equitable responses, all questions must be received by NFWF no later than 11:59 PM EDT on Wednesday, May 11.

APPLICATION CRITERIA
Offerors must prepare a proposal that will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria. Please organize the proposal based on these sections, limiting statements to no more than four (4) pages in length (exclusive of resume and/or Vitae).

1. Contact information. Provide full contact information including name, address, phone, and e-mail.

2. Fisheries experience. The Offeror should detail experience working in fisheries management, particularly with pelagic longline fisheries and/or fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. Please include any previous experience working directly with fishers, dealers, gear providers, managers, and other interested fisheries stakeholders in the Gulf.

3. Project Management. Describe any relevant project management experience. Any examples given should detail the scale and scope of the project and the specific roles played in project management and implementation.

4. Communications experience. Detail any relevant experience engaging fishers, generating written outreach materials, and/or coordinating or supporting events. Links to communication/outreach products are encouraged if available.

5. Qualifications. Provide a Resume and/or Vitae.

6. Budget. The offer must contain a budget that represents the estimated all-inclusive costs associated with completing the tasks in this RFQ. In this section, please include a total cost estimate along with a brief budget narrative to explain anticipated project time and costs. In addition, please complete the complementary budget template provided (Budget Template) as separate component of the application package. The budget should not exceed a 12-month period of performance and should outline estimates of percent time needed to complete tasks.

7. References. Include contact information for three (3) professional references.

TIMELINE
- Offer Deadline: Thursday, May 19
- Deadline to Submit Questions: Wednesday, May 11
- Responses to Questions Posted: Thursday, May 12
• Interviews of Selected Finalists: May 23 – June 3
• Tentative NFWF Notification to Offerors: Friday, June 10

CONTRACTOR INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS
The selected Contractor must agree to obtain and maintain adequate insurance against liability for injury to persons or property from any and all activities undertaken by the selected Contractor and associated with the signed contract in any way and will have NFWF named as an additional insured on all such policies and provide NFWF with appropriate Certificates of Insurance reflecting such additions within 60 days of the contract being fully executed. The insurance must have (1) Statutory worker’s compensation for all employees of the selected Contractor; (2) Commercial General Liability Insurance on an occurrence form for bodily injury and property damage with limits of liability of $1,000,000 combined single limit each occurrence and $2,000,000 annual aggregate; and (3) Business automobile liability coverage owned, hired and non-owned vehicles with limits of $1,000,000 combined single limit each occurrence. The limits listed above may be attained through an umbrella liability policy.

SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS
1. Conflicts of Interest
   By submitting a Statement of Qualifications in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it does not currently have any apparent or actual conflict of interest, as described herein. In the event an offeror currently has, will have during the life of the contemplated contract, or becomes aware of an apparent or actual conflict of interest, in the event an award is made, the offeror must notify NFWF in writing in the Statement of Qualifications, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the Statement of Qualifications) of such apparent or actual conflicts of interest, including organizational conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the contractor, the contractor’s employees, or the contractor’s subcontractors in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests, or otherwise. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the offeror, the offeror’s employees, or the offeror’s future subcontractors in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the NFWF Contracting Officer will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the offeror to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies NFWF may result in the proposal not being selected for award.

2. Additional Responsibility Matters
   By submitting a Statement of Qualifications in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it is eligible for award of a contract resulting from this solicitation and that it is not subject to any of the below circumstances:

   Has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not
necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Was convicted (or had an officer or agent of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Is listed on the General Services Administration’s, government-wide System for Award Management Exclusions (SAM Exclusions), in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 C.F.R Part 180 that implement E.O.s 12549 (3 C.F.R., 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 C.F.R., 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension, “ or intends to enter into any subaward, contract or other contract using funds provided by NFWF with any party listed on the SAM Exclusions in accordance with Executive Orders 12549 and 12689. The SAM Exclusions can be found at https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/.