



GULF OF MEXICO RESEARCH INITIATIVE
RESEARCH BOARD

Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative

Request for Proposals-II

Request for Proposals from individual investigators or collaborative efforts involving a principal investigator and up to three co-principal investigators

15 December 2011

Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative

SYNOPSIS OF GULF OF MEXICO RESEARCH INITIATIVE

On 24 May 2010, BP committed \$500 million over a 10-year period to create a broad, independent research program to be conducted at research institutions primarily in the US Gulf Coast States. The program will be known as the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI).¹ On 15 June 2010, BP announced the names of the scientific experts who would form GoMRI's independent Research Board.² BP, in consultation with the White House³ and the Governors of the five Gulf Coastal States,⁴ later expanded the GoMRI Research Board to 20 members by adding additional scientific expertise. The Research Board is responsible for preparing this and subsequent requests for proposals (RFPs), enabling an open and transparent peer-review process, selecting proposals for funding, and reviewing annual progress for continuation funding. This RFP, designated RFP-II, is devoted to the selection of proposals from individual investigators or collaborative efforts involving a principal investigator (PI) and up to three co-principal investigators (co-PIs) from up to three additional institutions and is focused on the research themes stated on page 8 herein and the GoMRI Master Research Agreement (MRA) (version 1.1)⁵. RFP-II will fund activities for 1 to 3 years.

On March 14, 2011, BP and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (the Alliance or GOMA is a non-profit entity formed by the Governors of the five Gulf Coastal States) entered into the GoMRI Master Research Agreement (GoMRI MRA)⁶. The GoMRI MRA creates the structure for the GoMRI, the selection and distribution of grants from the GoMRI, as well as the funding, conduct, and oversight of research in furtherance of the purposes of the GoMRI. Any investigator or co-investigator and their research institution that receives funding, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, under the GoMRI is subject to and must comply with the terms and conditions of the GoMRI MRA⁷.

The objectives of the GoMRI are to investigate the impacts of the oil, dispersed oil, and dispersant on the ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico and affected Gulf Coastal States in a broad context of improving fundamental understanding of the dynamics of such events, the associated environmental stresses, and the public health implications. The GoMRI will also develop improved spill mitigation, oil and gas detection, characterization, and remediation technologies. The ultimate goal of the GoMRI will be to improve society's ability to understand and respond to the impacts of petroleum pollution and related stressors of the marine and coastal ecosystems, with an emphasis on conditions in the Gulf of Mexico. Knowledge accrued will be applied to restoration and to improvement of the long-term environmental health of the Gulf of Mexico.

The GoMRI is an independent scientific research program and is separate from the Natural Resources Damages Assessment process, and BP agrees that the participation of the Alliance in this Agreement shall not result in a credit against or defense to any claims for natural resource damages or assessment costs.⁸

¹ <http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=2012968&contentId=7062370>

² <http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=2012968&contentId=7062936>

³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/fact-sheet-claims-and-escrow>

⁴ <http://news.tamhsc.edu/2011/01/11/sumaya-appointed-to-gulf-oil-spill-board>

⁵ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/about-gri/master-research-agreement/>

⁶ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/about-gri/master-research-agreement/>

⁷ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/about-gri/master-research-agreement/>

⁸ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/about-gri/master-research-agreement/>

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Funding from the GoMRI for rapid response in GoMRI Year 1 (1 June 2010 to 31 May 2011) was distributed directly by BP, while partial funding for GoMRI Year 2 (1 June 2011 to 31 May 2012) has already been awarded by the Research Board to Consortia in response to GoMRI RFP-I⁹, and awarded in response to RFP-III for short term interim sampling and measurements to fill in gaps between GoMRI Year 1 and the initiation of Consortia research funded via RFP-I¹⁰. This RFP-II requests proposals from individual investigators or collaborative efforts involving a PI and up to three co-PIs from up to three additional institutions and is focused on essentially the same research themes described in RFP-I with revision of Theme 5 (see page 8 herein). RFP-II will fund activities for 1 to 3 years in duration.

The total funds available for distribution through RFP-II will be up to \$7.5 million per year for up to 3 years; and funding for each approved proposal is expected to be between \$100,000 (minimum) and \$1 million (maximum) per year. The annual funding level for all GoMRI activities is expected to be \$50 million per year. The total funds allocated in funding consortia proposals in response to RFP-I are \$37.5 million per year for the 3 years, for a total of \$112.5 million.

The GoMRI research program involving Research Consortia (RFP-I) and individual investigator or collaborative efforts involving a PI and up to three co-PIs from up to three additional institutions (RFP-II) emphasizes interdisciplinary science and technology involving experts in physical, chemical, geological, and biological oceanography; marine biology; coastal and reef ecosystems, fisheries and wildlife ecology; public health; and associated development of physical, chemical, and biological instrumentation, advanced modeling, and informatics, among other disciplines appropriate to pursuing research to achieve the goals of the GoMRI and specified in research themes provided later in this document. RFP-II responses may be, but are not required to be, interdisciplinary in nature.

All activities selected for GoMRI funding will combine state-of-the-art research with deep scientific knowledge of the ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico to create fundamental advances in understanding the interactions that occurred and continue to occur among the marine and coastal ecosystems, oil, and oil dispersants produced by the catastrophic loss of the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) oil drilling platform. The success of the GoMRI depends on a combination of regional knowledge with regional, national, and international research innovation.

The deadline to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) is 17 January 2012 at 9:00 p.m. EST. No proposal will be accepted without an LOI.

The deadline to submit a proposal is 8 March 2012 at 9:00 p.m. EST.

⁹ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/research/awards/year-2-4-rfp-i-consortia-grant-awards/>

¹⁰ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/research/awards/rfp-iii-awards/>

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List of Acronyms

AU	Administrative Unit
Co-PI	Co-Principal Investigator
DWH	Deepwater Horizon
GoMRI	Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative
GOMA	Gulf of Mexico Alliance
IP	Intellectual Property
PI	Principal Investigator
LOI	Letter of Intent
MRA	Master Research Agreement
NERF	Non-Exclusive, Royalty-Free
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NSF	National Science Foundation
RFP	Request for Proposals
US	United States

Section I: Background and Description

Context for the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative¹¹

On 20 April 2010, the DWH drilling rig operating approximately 50 miles (80 km) off of the coast of Louisiana experienced a catastrophic failure that resulted in the release of petroleum (oil and gas) and subsequent explosion and fire, the ultimate sinking of the rig, and a discharge of gas and light sweet crude oil from an ocean depth of nominally 5000 feet (1525 m).

The DWH spill was likely the largest in US history. The large oil and gas volumes released during the spill are part of a series of petroleum-related impacts on the Gulf of Mexico, including the IXTOC I spill in 1979, the large-scale oil spillage during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the chronic annual releases due to ship activity, industry activity, and human use.

The DWH spill resulted in petroleum and dispersants entering the Gulf of Mexico at varied concentration levels vertically and laterally, with a yet-to-be-determined impact on the ecosystems. Characterizing the distribution, composition, and ecosystem interactions of the petroleum and its constituents and dispersants is essential to understanding the long-term consequences of this and other petroleum releases in the context of the other environmental stresses facing the Gulf of Mexico. Understanding the relevant geophysical, chemical, biological, and ecological processes and their interactions is essential to predicting the rate and nature of ecosystem recovery and the types of intervention needed to speed that recovery. The knowledge gained from study of the aftermath of the DWH spill will also serve more broadly to address society's need to maintain healthy marine and coastal ecosystems in the face of the pressures of worldwide economic growth and transition to sustainable development.

The ocean science and public health research communities in general, and researchers in the affected Gulf States in particular, are keenly interested in undertaking a comprehensive research program to assess the impact of the spill—and, more broadly, the impact of petroleum releases to the ocean in general—on the integrated marine and coastal ecosystems, including coastal, open ocean, and deep ocean ecosystems, and public health concerns associated with petroleum releases. In addition, there is a clear need for research and development into improved technologies for rapid response and mitigation of

¹¹ The GoMRI MRA creates the structure for the GoMRI, the selection and distribution of grants from the GoMRI, as well as the funding, conduct, and oversight of research in furtherance of the purposes of the GoMRI. Any Research Consortium, research institution, PI, or co-PI that receives funding, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, under the GoMRI is subject to and must comply with the terms of the GoMRI MRA. The home institution of any investigator or co-investigator selected for funding through a GoMRI RFP must enter into a grant agreement, subject to the terms set forth in the GoMRI MRA, as it may be amended from time-to-time. To the extent that this or subsequent RFPs are inconsistent with the GoMRI MRA, the GoMRI MRA shall apply and take precedence over any inconsistent terms contained in such RFPs. The GoMRI MRA is available at <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/about-gri/master-research-agreement/>. To the extent that any home institution of any PI or Co-PI submitting a proposal in response to this RFP-II is restricted by law from agreeing to any applicable MRA provision, including, but not limited to the MRA Section 12 (Indemnities), Section 15 (Dispute Resolution) or the IP and Publications Policy attached as Appendix 3 to the MRA, the Proposal shall indicate which provisions the PI's or co-PI's home institution objects to, as well as the specific legal basis for any such objection.

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petroleum releases and their impacts, including detection and characterization of petroleum (and its constituents) and response and remediation approaches.

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The objectives of the GoMRI are to investigate the impacts of the oil, dispersed oil, and dispersant on the ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico and affected coastal States in a broad context of improving fundamental understanding of the dynamics of such events and the associated environmental stresses and public health implications. The GoMRI will also fund research into improved spill mitigation, oil and gas detection, and characterization and remediation technologies. The ultimate goals of the GoMRI are to improve society's ability to understand, respond to, and mitigate the impacts of petroleum pollution and related stressors of the marine and coastal ecosystems, with an emphasis on conditions found in the Gulf of Mexico. Knowledge accrued will be applied to restoration and to improvement of the long-term environmental health of the Gulf of Mexico.

In general, GoMRI research projects shall be led by PIs in the Gulf Coast States, provided that co-PIs outside of the Gulf Coast States may participate in such projects to the extent required to ensure the delivery of high quality scientific studies in fulfillment of the objectives and ultimate goal of the GoMRI.

The programs selected for funding will combine state-of-the-art research approaches with deep scientific knowledge of the Gulf of Mexico in order to generate fundamental advances in understanding the interactions that occurred and continue to occur among the marine ecosystem, oil, and oil dispersants produced by the catastrophic loss of the DWH oil drilling platform. The success of the research program depends on a combination of regional knowledge with regional, national, and international research innovation.

In May 2010, BP committed \$500 million over a 10-year period (1 June 2010 – 31 May 2020) to create a broad, independent research program, the GoMRI. Annual funding for all GoMRI activities is estimated to be \$50 million per year. The total funds available for distribution through RFP-II (this RFP) will be up to \$7.5 million per year for up to 3 years; the expected amount per approved proposal is \$100,000 to \$1 million per year. (The total funds available for distribution to Research Consortia through RFP-I are expected to be \$37.5 million per year for 3 years, for a total of \$112.5 million.)

BP provided GoMRI Year 1 (1 June 2010 – 31 May 2011) funds to Gulf Coast State institutions for rapid-response studies in the immediate aftermath of the DWH oil spill¹²). Research Consortia were chosen for funding for GoMRI Years 2–4 (1 June 2011 – 31 May 2014) through a competitive peer review of the proposals submitted in response to RFP-I.

Projects will be chosen for funding through a competitive peer review of the proposals submitted in response to RFP-II (this RFP). The peer-review process, selection of funded projects and continuation annual funding will be carried out under the direction of the GoMRI Research Board, subject to the terms of the GoMRI MRA. The GoMRI Research Board¹³ has 20 members, 10 appointed by BP and 2 recommended by the Governor of each of the 5 Gulf Coast States and appointed by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance.

¹² <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/research/awards/year-one-rapid-response-studies/>

¹³ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/gri-research-board/board-roster/>

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Research Themes of the GoMRI

Since the DWH spill in April 2010, the oceanographic and environmental communities have strongly advocated the importance of research in the Gulf of Mexico and the affected Gulf States for characterization of the event, elucidation of the processes affecting the oil/dispersant system, and assessment of the long-term impact. Numerous discussions and three important meetings open to public participation were held to define the GoMRI intellectual themes¹⁴.

The output from these meetings is the basis for the major research themes addressed in RFP-II. These are:

1. Physical distribution, dispersion, and dilution of petroleum (oil and gas), its constituents, and associated contaminants (e.g., dispersants) under the action of physical oceanographic processes, air-sea interactions, and tropical storms.
2. Chemical evolution and biological degradation of the petroleum/dispersant systems and subsequent interaction with coastal, open-ocean, and deep-water ecosystems.
3. Environmental effects of the petroleum/dispersant system on the sea floor, water column, coastal waters, beach sediments, wetlands, marshes, and organisms; and the science of ecosystem recovery.
4. Technology developments for improved response, mitigation, detection, characterization, and remediation associated with oil spills and gas releases.
5. Impact of oil spills on public health.

Each proposal is expected to develop and enunciate a clear plan to address any one of these themes. The plan should clearly describe how the proposed research would serve to accomplish the long-term goals of the GoMRI.

Section II: Structure of the GoMRI

Each grant will be awarded for a period not to exceed 3 years, and annual continuation of funding will be subject to acceptable progress as judged by the Research Board as well as satisfaction of such additional requirements as are set forth in the GoMRI MRA. The Research Board will hold the right to recommend funding for only selected parts of any given research proposal, to require modifications to the proposed work, personnel, and budget of any proposal funding will not be in the form of endowments to home institutions of the investigators. The level of funding for each project is expected to be different, concomitant with the requirements of the research to be performed.

As described in the GoMRI MRA, BP will transmit funds to a third party non-profit entity (the Grant Unit) and the Grant Unit will enter into grant agreements with the investigator's home institution or the lead investigator's home institution in the case of proposals with a PI and co-PIs. The investigator's home institution, which will receive the grant, must be a US academic or non-profit research institution (the Lead Research Institution).

¹⁴ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/research/research-themes/>

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The Research Board Point of Contact will be the Chair, Professor Rita Colwell, who can be contacted via e-mail at griquestions@aibs.org.

Funding

BP has committed \$500 million to fund the GoMRI over a 10-year period. These funds will support operating expenditures for the GoMRI, including:

- Support for co-investigators, postdoctoral researchers, graduate and undergraduate research students, and associated research expenses. Support for PI, postdoctoral researchers, graduate and undergraduate research students, and associated research expenses at the PI's institution.
- Sub-awards to support co-PIs, postdoctoral researchers, graduate and undergraduate research students, and associated research expenses at up to three other institutions.
- Field tests and demonstration projects needed to prove new technology.
- Costs of establishing and maintaining a publicly accessible, transparent database of information generated by the GoMRI that is consistent with modern informatics best practices.
- Funding of research vessel cruises, research aircraft flights, small boat operations, and use of other large research facilities, such as computer modeling centers, scanning electron microscopes, and major analytical chemistry or analytical biology instrument centers.
- Fast-action GoMRI Year 1 block grants awarded by BP to Gulf institutions or Consortia of institutions and to the National Institutes of Health in the initial and past first year of GoMRI funding.
- Costs associated with operation of the Research Board Administrative Support Group, GoMRI Administrative Unit (AU), GoMRI Grant Unit, and Research Board functions.
- Standard academic overhead (e.g., US Government approved overhead rates for research grants from such entities as the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense, NOAA – whichever agency is the oversight audit agency for federal grants and contracts at that institution) that supports the costs of the physical infrastructure and the administration of research activities.

The funds distributed by BP under the GoMRI shall not be used by any research institution, PI, or co-PI for the acquisition or construction of physical infrastructure (including, but not limited to ships, autonomous underwater vehicles, or laboratories), except where specifically authorized by the Research Board pursuant to a grant or annual continuation funding under such grant.

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Timeline

Year 2012

17 January 9:00 p.m. EST	LOI from each prospective PI is due.
8 March	Proposals in response to RFP-II are due
30 June	Announcement of projects funded in response to RFP-II

Section III: Research Program

An essential criterion for selection of projects for funding will be the significance of the proposed work in response to one and only one of the GoMRI research themes described in Section I of this RFP and its potential to address the goals of the GoMRI. Each PI may submit only one proposal as PI and may be involved in up to two additional proposals. Thus, an individual can be involved in a maximum of three proposals. Submission of more than one proposal by an individual as PI and involvement in more than two proposals as co-PI, or involvement in more than three proposals as a co-PI alone, will disqualify all such proposals involving the individual. It is the responsibility of the submitters to confirm that each member of the entire team is within the eligibility guidelines.

Each proposal should present a clearly defined vision, its goals in the context of the broad GoMRI goals, and the expected impact of its research on the specific theme. Innovative combinations of scientific problem definition and state-of-the-art research techniques with deep scientific and technical knowledge of the Gulf of Mexico system are expected to provide the greatest opportunity for significant scientific advances. Evidence of potential transformative advances in understanding the interactions that occurred and continue to occur among the marine and coastal ecosystems, petroleum, and dispersants will be an important criterion for assessment of a proposal.

A proposal must include a clear description of the key personnel involved and, if there is more than one investigator, a description of the allocation of resources among the PI and co-PIs. The capabilities required for an investigator or investigators include:

- A compelling scientific vision with a well-defined goal or goals within the scope of a given GoMRI theme.
- World-class expertise in the topics of the GoMRI, including specific local knowledge of the environmental and public health issues in the Gulf of Mexico region
- A capacity for delivering mission-oriented research.

Each research program shall be led by a lead PI whose home institution will enter into a grant agreement on behalf of the program, as well as subgrant agreements with the home institutions of the Co-PIs. The PI and the Lead Research Institution shall have various responsibilities as outlined in the GoMRI MRA (see for example duties described in section 4.4 and 4.5 of the MRA) and as specified by the Research Board, which shall include managing the implementation of research proposals funded under the GoMRI.

The PI's primary interface for the research program and reporting of results will be with the Research Board. Interactions between the Research Board and the PI will include participation in meetings with the Research Board and/or its representatives. This may

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require 5 days of travel commitment by a PI and co-PIs for an annual meeting with the Research Board and others involved in the GoMRI research in addition to research travel costs.

The GoMRI AU will coordinate with the PI to fulfill the reporting requirements described in RFP-II and provide to the Research Board with the annual planning updates and requests for continuation of funds. The GoMRI AU will implement an accounting system to process invoices and to prepare quarterly updates and an annual report of expenditures to be provided to the Research Board. The GoMRI AU will also maintain full records of all PIs and co-PIs, publications, presentations, reports, and activities of the project and make those available to the Research Board. The GoMRI AU will develop and maintain a website to make such information appropriately available to the public.

Infrastructure and Research Facilities

Full proposals should include a reasonably detailed plan and budget for all required facilities (e.g., vessels, underwater vehicles, supercomputers, and aircraft). This plan should include a schedule framework, a detailed budget, and an explanation of the plan for contingencies should costs change. The sampling and survey plan requiring these facilities should be provided in the scientific/technical part of the proposal and referenced in the facilities section.

If sampling technology, analytical tools, or computational infrastructure need to be purchased or developed, all program costs should be clearly stated. If access to existing long-term monitoring sites or other research facilities located in the Gulf of Mexico is required, terms of access and all associated costs should be clearly stated.

Investigators are expected to take full advantage of existing technology and infrastructure when already available. For example, access to existing capabilities should be ensured, rather than through funding the development of duplicate capabilities. The bias for the use of existing technology places the emphasis on scientific research and analysis, rather than duplicative expansion of technology and systems, including data management and informatics. If the research program explores new areas requiring the development of special technology, the costs for the development of that technology must be reasonable and appropriate.

The funds distributed by BP under the GoMRI shall be used for the active conduct of research, and shall generally not be used by any research institution, PI or co-PI for the acquisition or construction of physical infrastructure, including, but not limited to ships, autonomous underwater vehicles or laboratories (Capital Expenditures). GoMRI funds may only be used for Capital Expenditures to the extent that the investigator was not able to obtain access to the required capital equipment through other collaborations or partnerships, and such funding has been specifically approved by the Research Board under an approved grant or annual continuation of funding under such grant.

Research Staff

The PI may draw appropriate talent from up to three additional institutions (three co-PIs maximum) and personnel from the other institutions should be reimbursed appropriately for their time commitment to the research program based on the salary structures at their home institutions. The research that they lead will be open in nature and will include work

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by undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral research associates as appropriate. Payroll and personnel reimbursement policies of the home institutions of each research participant will be followed for all participants.

All research staff conducting activities financed, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, through the GoMRI, including PI, co-PIs, undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral research associates, are subject to and must comply with the terms of the GoMRI MRA, including the requirement that all activities are to be carried out under professional standards of responsible conduct in research (e.g., as defined by the best practices outlined and described in the U.S. National Academy of Sciences “On Being a Scientist: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in Research. Third Edition” (2009), National Academies Press)¹⁵.

Interaction with For-Profit Organizations

It is expected that the vast majority of the work contemplated in the GoMRI will be conducted in either academic or not-for-profit institutions. However, there is a possibility that an investigator may have an existing relationship, or may find it advantageous to enter into a new relationship, with a private or for-profit entity. Their contributions could be in the form of products, services, and expertise that will be crucial to the delivery of the research objectives. As with all participants in the GoMRI, any activities by private or for-profit entities will be subject to the terms of the GoMRI MRA.

Publication, Data, and Intellectual Property

The work carried out under the auspices of the GoMRI is for the purpose of advancing knowledge and is expected to be published in peer-reviewed journals with excellent reputations. By accepting funding under the GoMRI, each PI, research institution and co-PI agrees to be bound by all terms and conditions of the GoMRI MRA, including the Intellectual Property and Publications Policy of the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative¹⁶.

The work carried out in the GoMRI is also expected to have wide utility to other researchers, government agencies, and others. The provision of a full and coherent database accessible to all scientists, policy makers, and the public is an essential outcome of the GoMRI. The GoMRI AU will develop and maintain or contract such work for a public database of GoMRI research results (data and metadata), with data to be posted with minimum time delay. It is a requirement that all GoMRI-sponsored data and the essential metadata be submitted to the GoMRI-AU and federal database or nationally recognized repository appropriate for the PI's or co-PI's discipline with minimum time delay. Satellite imagery will be included where appropriate. It is essential that provision be made that video data be tagged with appropriate information to be included in the data submission. In addition, each PI or co-PI is required to submit to the GoMRI AU evidence of these submissions with all necessary links. The GoMRI AU will be responsible for managing and linking these individual submissions. By this means, it will be possible to combine individual efforts into a coherent body of work that represents the entire GoMRI.

Investigators should include in their proposal their recommendation on a minimum time delay for submission of various types of sampling and analysis data, and include in budgets

¹⁵ http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12192

¹⁶ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/about-gri/master-research-agreement/>

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the costs associated with such submissions. These proposed timelines will be taken into account and a final decision will be made by the Research Board and communicated via the GoMRI AU at the time of final grant award negotiations.

It is the intent of the Research Board that these data management activities draw to the greatest extent possible on existing data management systems. The Research Board, in consultation with the Directors of the Research Consortia chosen for funding from proposals responding to RFP-I and the GoMRI AU, will develop policies concerning the appropriate formats and procedures for the GoMRI Research Database to be created and managed by the GoMRI AU. PIs and co-PIs will then be required to adhere to all GoMRI data policies.

GoMRI Agreements

Upon selection of the approved project, grant agreements will be negotiated and executed between the GoMRI Grant Unit and the PI in accordance with the GoMRI MRA. The Lead Research Institution shall execute the grant agreement on behalf of the PI and all co-PIs, and shall then enter into sub-grant agreements with the home institutions of the co-PIs; both the grant and sub-grant agreements shall incorporate the terms of the GoMRI MRA.¹⁷

Section IV: Format of the Letter of Intent and the Proposal

Letter of Intent

The LOI is an early commitment document intended to detail the interest of a principal investigator in submitting a proposal. Details of the format for the LOI are found at <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/request-for-proposals/rfp-ii/>. The deadline to submit a LOI is 17 January 2012 at 9:00 p.m. EST. No proposal will be accepted without an LOI.

The LOI will provide essential information for avoiding conflicts of interest in the establishment of lists of potential reviewers and for determining the number of reviewers needed for the review process.

Proposal

The formal proposal to be submitted on or before 8 March 2012 at 9:00 p.m. EST should indicate the interest, approach, and qualifications of the PI. The proposal must follow the format outlined in the instructions document, with reference to the specific questions posed in the previous sections of the RFP. Instructions for the proposal format are at <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/request-for-proposals/rfp-ii/>.

¹⁷ <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/about-gri/master-research-agreement/>

Section V: Evaluation Criteria

Guidance regarding evaluation of the proposals is as follows, with Scientific Merit a primary consideration.

Scientific Merit (60%)

- Scope, quality, and potential for fundamentally significant results of the proposed research
- A demonstrated record of scientific achievement in the relevant science
- Research will address the goals of improving the environmental robustness of the Gulf of Mexico and/or the related issues of public health
- Value of the anticipated research outcomes for contributing to the major research themes of the GoMRI from a cost-effectiveness perspective

Capability and Experience (40%)

- Expertise of PI and co-PIs in the relevant research domains
- Track record of the PI and co-PIs in the delivery of focused research
- Realistic research timeline and availability of appropriate facilities for the duration of the project

Review Process

The review process will be conducted in a manner similar to that at NSF, in which panels of experts will evaluate the proposals and provide these evaluations and their recommendations to the Research Board for final selection of funded proposals and decisions about allocation of funding.

Section VI: Instructions for Proposal Submission

1.0 General

- 1.1 This RFP is for establishment of PI-led projects, with direct funding provided to the PI from the GoMRI Grant Unit.

2.0 Proposal Submittal AU contractor

- 2.1 LOIs must be submitted to the Research Board on or before 17 January 2012 at 9:00 p.m. EST to <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/request-for-proposals/rfp-ii/rfp-ii-letter-of-intent-submission-form/> and must follow all of the instructions detailed in the RFP-II Instructions document, which can be found at <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/request-for-proposals/rfp-ii/>.
- 2.2 Full proposals must be submitted to the Research Board on or before 8 March 2012, 2011 at 9:00 p.m. EST to <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/request-for->

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[proposals/rfp-ii/rfp-ii-upload-of-proposal-to-research-board/](http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/proposals/rfp-ii/rfp-ii-upload-of-proposal-to-research-board/). The proposal must follow all of the instructions detailed in the RFP-II Instructions document, which can be found at <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/request-for-proposals/rfp-ii/>.

- 2.3 If you will be providing confidential information in connection with your response to RFP-II, then indicate the segments that cannot be made public and why.
- 2.4 To the extent that any home institution of any PI or Co-PI submitting a proposal in response to this RFP-II is restricted by law from agreeing to any applicable MRA provision, including, but not limited to the MRA Section 12 (Indemnities), Section 15 (Dispute Resolution) or the IP and Publications Policy attached as Appendix 3 to the MRA, the Proposal shall indicate which provisions the PI's or Co-PI's home institution objects to, as well as the specific legal basis for any such objection.

3.0 RFP Document Clarification

Requests for clarification of RFP-II and proposal instructions must be submitted via the GoMRI website: <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/faq-rfpII/>. Questions will not be accepted via phone or direct e-mail to BP, GoMRI AU, any Research Board member, or any other group. Please review the Frequently Asked Questions posted on the website before submitting a question. This will be updated regularly with all responses to submitted questions.

Pertinent additional information given to any prospective PI will be posted on the GoMRI website <http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org/request-for-proposals/rfp-ii/> and forwarded to all prospective PIs as identified by their submission of an LOI. Prospective PIs will be the single point of contact for all correspondence.

4.0 BP and Second Party Obligations

Neither BP, GOMA (including the GoMRI AU), the Research Board, nor any third party not-for-profit organization providing administrative support to the GoMRI under the terms of the GoMRI MRA (including the American Institute of Biological Sciences [serving as the Research Board Administrative Unit] and the GoMRI Grant Unit [Consortium for Ocean Leadership or the GoMRI AU]) shall be under any obligation to provide funding to any specific proposal submitted, and shall not be held liable for any expense incurred in preparation or submittal of any proposal or any subsequent discussion and/or negotiations.

5.0 RFP Document Modification

The Research Board may clarify RFP-II in any respect by way of clarification, addition, deletion or otherwise, up to 2 weeks prior to the due date of 8 March 2012, and will post any such changes on the GoMRI website and also forward to all proposing PIs.

6.0 Proposal Authorization

The proposal shall be signed by those persons duly authorized to sign such document on behalf of the PI's Institution and sub-grantees. The names and titles shall be typed beneath their usual signatures (electronic signatures are acceptable).

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7.0 Proposal Composition

- 7.1 It should be noted that RFP-II and information in the completed proposal, and subsequent modifications to the proposal as requested by the Research Board, shall form the basis of any award that may ensue.
- 7.2 A prospective PI shall ensure that their proposal is complete in all respects such that a complete and meaningful evaluation can be accomplished.
- 7.3 Proposals that are incomplete or do not address the research foci and required structure may be too difficult to fairly evaluate and therefore may be rejected without complete evaluation.
- 7.4 The registered name and address of the PI submitting the proposal shall be clearly indicated.

8.0 RFP Document Errors or Omissions

The prospective principal investigator shall take no advantage of any apparent errors or omissions in RFP-II. In the event that any errors or omissions are discovered, the prospective principal investigator shall immediately notify the Research Board Chair, Professor Rita Colwell, who can be contacted via e-mail at griquestions@aibs.org.

9.0 Award of Grant

Following review, the Research Board may elect to award a grant for any, all, or none of the proposed activities in any given proposal. The selection of each PI and associated co-PIs include a degree of selectivity, and the decision to make an award is entirely held by the Research Board within the scope of RFP-II and the governing documents of the GoMRI, including the GoMRI MRA.