



Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Plan Request for Proposals: Texas OneGulf Synthesis Grant

I. Introduction and Background

The Texas OneGulf Center of Excellence invites proposals for a project to develop a Communication and Engagement plan to help Texas OneGulf interact effectively with Gulf of Mexico policy- and decision-makers, as well as other stakeholder groups. Texas OneGulf is a consortium of nine research institutions funded, in part, with federal funding from the U. S. Department of the Treasury through the State of Texas under the RESTORE Act. Our mission is to improve our understanding of the Gulf of Mexico large marine ecosystem and clearly delineate its' role in human health and well-being in an effort to promote a healthy environment and communities in Texas, the Gulf region and beyond.

Texas OneGulf has established the Texas OneGulf Network of Experts (TONE), which consists of more than 160 scientists, policy experts and researchers, to provide a trusted resource for information- and science-driven solutions relevant to Gulf of Mexico issues that affect Texas and the region. In support of this goal, Texas OneGulf plans to seek assistance from a team with expertise in policy, political science, communication, and issues related to the Gulf of Mexico, to develop a communication and engagement plan for how Texas OneGulf can most effectively communicate and engage with the various Gulf of Mexico stakeholders – including government policy makers, resource management agencies, non-governmental organizations, business and industry, media, and the public. The Texas OneGulf Strategic Research and Action Plan ([Click here for most recent version](#)) lays out the research focus areas and strategic actions that will direct Texas OneGulf efforts over the next 15 years.

II. Needs Description

Texas OneGulf is designed with the capacity and flexibility to address all five disciplines denoted in Section 1605 of the RESTORE Act. Texas OneGulf will bring to bear the best available science to: 1) *Foster coastal sustainability, restoration and protection*; 2) *Enhance coastal fisheries and wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring*; 3) *Secure the safe sustainable development of the offshore energy resources of the Gulf of Mexico*; 4) *Support sustainable and resilient growth, economic and commercial development*; and, 5) *Provide comprehensive observation, monitoring and mapping of the Gulf of Mexico*. This Request for Proposals (RFP) will potentially address each of these disciplines.

The goal of Texas OneGulf is to become a trusted source of scientific information about the Gulf of Mexico. To accomplish that goal, Texas OneGulf and its TONE must develop strong lines of communication with stakeholders and provide them with scientific information that stakeholders find useful to address Gulf of Mexico-related issues and crises. The winning proposal will be expected to use their expertise to help Texas OneGulf provide decision support by: 1) providing a stakeholder analysis, with special emphasis on policy- and decision-makers, 2) understanding stakeholder perceptions of the issues and threats related to the Gulf that these stakeholders perceive to be most important for example resource management actions aimed at addressing the short-term and long-term issues/threats to both environmental and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico and the impact on coastal resources and communities; 3) analyzing the ability of Texas OneGulf and TONE to help address these issues; and 4) developing a comprehensive communications and engagement plan for Texas OneGulf to provide the best available science, policy assessment and information to stakeholders to support a sustainable, healthy environment and economy for the Gulf of Mexico and its' communities.



III. Eligibility and Award Information

To be eligible, the Principal Investigator (PI) must be a member of the Synthesis/Solutions Network (SSN), a subgroup of the TONE; however, collaboration outside of the TONE is both acceptable and encouraged. An individual may serve as PI on only one proposal; however, an individual may participate in more than one proposal as a team member.

One award will be made; the projected funding amount will be a maximum of \$80K with a completion date on or before July 30th, 2018 the final report will be due to Texas OneGulf no later than July 30th, 2018. The start date will be determined by the Notice to Commence from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). All proposed work must be completed during this period. No extensions will be available.

IV. Proposal Submission Instructions

Proposals are due by 5 pm Central Daylight Time June 15th, 2017

Proposal should be submitted, in PDF format, via email to: jeff.francis@tamucc.edu.

V. Proposal Preparation Instructions

The proposal should consist of the following sections:

- 1) Cover Sheet (1 page)
- 2) Project Abstract (250 words)
- 3) Project Description (maximum 5 pages)
- 4) Budget
- 5) Budget Narrative (maximum 2 pages)
- 6) Biosketches of Team Members (maximum 2 pages per team member)

All sections must use Times New Roman 12 pt. or larger, or Arial or Helvetica 11 pt. or larger, double-spaced with the exception of the Project Abstract which will be single-spaced and justified. The proposal packet must be sent in PDF format.

Instructions for each section are provided below.

1. Cover Sheet (max. 1 page)

The cover sheet must include the following information:

- Project title
- Name, institution, email address and phone number of the Principal Investigator
- Names and institutions of all other team members
- Name, institution, email address and phone number of administrative contact
- Requested award amount

2. Project Abstract (max. 250 words)

The project abstract should provide a concise description of proposed approach including major information sources, and the expected project outcomes.



3. Project Description (max. 5 pages)

The project description should include:

- A. **List of Team Members:** List all team members, their institutions, their roles in the proposed project, and their relevant expertise.
 - B. **Stakeholder Analysis:** Describe proposed work to identify major stakeholders, with special emphasis on policy- and decision-makers in the Texas Legislature, Texas government agencies (e.g., personnel at agencies with missions that are impacted by the Gulf of Mexico including those tasked with resource management, tourism, crisis management, etc.). Stakeholder analysis should include tools or mapping outputs that help identify key stakeholders in each member group.
 - C. **Stakeholder Perceptions:** Describe how the project will identify issues/threats facing the Gulf as it pertains to both environmental and economic health as well as the implications these issues have in affecting human health. Then rank the levels of risk/vulnerability, awareness, concern and policy preferences **as perceived by the major stakeholders** (For example: resource management actions aimed at addressing the short-term and long-term issues/threats to both environmental and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico and the impact on coastal resources and communities). Describe expected sources of information, which may include the team members' expertise, information from previously conducted surveys and interviews, and proposed new data that may be collected.
 - D. **Analyze Texas OneGulf and TONE:** Describe how the team will analyze the capacity of Texas OneGulf and TONE to help address issues identified through stakeholder analysis and perceptions. The analysis should include an understanding of the capacity of Texas OneGulf and TONE as well as identify opportunities to improve that capacity to address the issues/threats identified through stakeholder analysis and perceptions.
 - E. **Work Plan:** Provide a list of major tasks, identify who will lead each task, and provide a project schedule with specific milestones, showing how the project will be completed within the funding period.
4. **Deliverable(s):** Create a comprehensive written plan that outlines the issues/threats facing the Gulf as it pertains to both environmental and economic health as well as the implications these issues have in affecting human health, ranked in importance by the stakeholder groups and their perceptions for the issues identified in Sections 3.B - D above. This plan should provide insight into the policy preferences of stakeholders in dealing with these issues. Special attention should be paid to policy- and decision-makers, as well as the media. As part of the comprehensive written report, include an analysis of the capacity of Texas OneGulf and Texas OneGulf Network of Experts (TONE) to bring expertise to bear on each of these issues. The analysis will include an understanding of the capacity of Texas OneGulf and TONE as well as identify opportunities to improve that capacity to address the issues/threats identified

5. Budget

The budget should be provided in the following categories:

- Personnel Support (name personnel, their time commitment, and allocated support)
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Supplies (materials and supplies)
- Other (consultants)
- Indirect Costs
- Total



6. Budget Narrative (max. 2 pages)

Provide narrative details for how the funds requested in each budget category will be used.

7. Biosketches (max. 2 pages per team member)

A biosketch should be provided for each team member that includes: name, education, professional positions in reverse chronological order, relevant expertise, and relevant experience and publications.

VI. Proposal Review Process and Criteria

Proposal review will be administered by the Texas OneGulf Management Team, who will initially review each proposal to ensure that each is administratively complete and conforms to the Request for Proposals (RFP) requirements. All proposals will then be reviewed by the Texas OneGulf Science Advisory Committee, an independent panel of qualified, unbiased reviewers and will review and rank each proposal on its' intellectual merits. Reviews and recommendations will be passed from the Texas OneGulf Science Advisory Committee to the Texas OneGulf Consortium leadership for final approval.

Review criteria will include:

- Project Responsiveness to Research Priorities (60%).
- Project Management and experience/qualifications of the team (30%).
- Project Costs and Broader Impacts (10%).

The selected project will then be required to go through a Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) application process for approval.

VII: Terms and Conditions:

All work associated with this RFP will adhere to the terms and conditions of the master contract between TCEQ and the Pass Through Entity (PTE), Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, in addition to Federal Terms and Conditions from the funding entity, the U.S. Department of Treasury.

VIII. Contact Information

Questions may be directed to jeff.francis@tamucc.edu