

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT (FOA)

Funding Agency: US Army Corps of Engineers Alaska District PO Box 6898 JBER AK 99506	Funding Instrument: Cooperative Agreement Funding Opportunity W911KB-24-2-0006 No. CFDA No: 12.005 Program Authority 16 U.S.C. 670c-1 (Sikes Act)
Issue Date: 23 July 2024	Application Due Date: 23 August 2024
Overview: Management, Species, Harbor Porpoise, (RAM#FXSBA53247215-A), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska - The objectives of this requirement are to (1) determine Harbor Porpoise presence in Knik Arm during the winter and (2) determine the presence of Harbor Porpoise in Knik Arm and the timing and extent of upstream movement of Harbor Porpoise in the Eagle River during summer and fall. See full Funding Opportunity Description in Section I.	
Estimated Total Funding: \$77,000.00	Estimated Number of Awards: 1
Contents of Full Text Announcement	
I. Funding Opportunity Description	V. Application Review Information
II. Award Information	VI. Award Administration Information
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Contact Information: Questions relating to Grants.gov including the registration process and system requirements should be directed to the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726. For assistance with the requirements of this Funding Opportunity Announcement, please contact the Grants Specialist, casandra.a.hutchins@usace.army.mil. Instructions to Applicants: The complete Funding Opportunity Announcement, application forms, and instructions are available for download at Grants.gov. Applications in response to this Funding Opportunity Announcement shall be submitted by the application due date. Applications may be submitted electronically via email or through Grants.gov. Applicants shall have a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number, registration with the System of Award Management (SAM), and registration with Grants.gov, if submitting application through Grants.gov. See Section IV of the Funding Opportunity Announcement for complete application submission information.	

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

Management, Species, Harbor Porpoise, (RAM#FXSBA53247215-A)

**Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska
June 2024**

Project Cost Ceiling: \$77,000.00

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Statement of Work (SOW) is to provide details of the described work to be performed to support the U.S. Air Force (USAF) through a cooperative agreement (CA) between the Recipient, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) in support of JBER's marine ecology and marine mammal programs. The Recipient shall provide a lead technician with demonstrated experience working on research vessels. This SOW is intended to describe work conducted for a single year of funding (FY24) which may, depending on timing of funding award, cross over two (2) field seasons.

1.2 Background

The USAF and U.S. Army, located on JBER, are mandated to train combat troops for global deployment. Part of the training requirements, for the Army units currently stationed on JBER, includes live fire training with high explosive (HE) mortar and artillery rounds. The only area on JBER approved for such training is the Eagle River Flats Impact area (ERF) which is bisected by the tidally influenced Eagle River. Training with HE rounds, in the ERF, is currently only allowed during the winter from 1 November through 31 March and only when there is a sufficient layer of ice on ERF to protect the underlying sediment. The ice thickness requirements for training at ERF are: two (2) inches of ice cover on water bodies within ERF to enable firing of 60-mm and 81-mm mortars; and five (5) inches of ice cover on water bodies to enable firing of 105-mm howitzers or 120-mm mortars. Prior to winter firing each year, the Army measures ice thickness to determine whether the requirements stated above are met.

Three (3) species of marine mammals, Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (CIBW), Harbor Porpoise, and Harbor Seal, make seasonal forays up to 4.2 km upstream in Eagle River and thus within the ERF. The use of the river and Eagle Bay by the two (2) cetaceans is monitored via static passive acoustic monitoring. The passive acoustic system used to monitor movement within the upriver reaches of Eagle River has, thus far, only been successfully deployed during the open water season (period without ice) whereas biologists have developed techniques to allow year-round monitoring at the mouth.

Both Harbor Porpoise and CIBW utilize the upper portions of the tidally influenced portion of Eagle River into the late fall (into November) and are detected acoustically at the mouth year-round. All three (3) species are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), and the CIBW is further protected under the US Endangered Species Act (ESA). The MMPA strictly prohibits the unauthorized "take" of marine mammals. In order to analyze the potential for adverse impacts (i.e., takes) to these marine mammals pursuant to the MMPA, managers must conduct in-depth, thorough analyses, often leading to consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the regulatory agency for most marine mammals. In order to complete these analyses, managers must have a clear understanding of the habitat present within and adjacent to JBER

as well as when and how marine mammals use that habitat. Unfortunately, there is little information on the habitat, life history and biology of the Harbor Porpoise (Gulf of Alaska stock), especially in relation to the usage of Knik Arm and associated rivers during the months when ice is present.

The use of Eagle River and Eagle Bay by CIBW and Harbor Porpoise has been investigated historically using static passive acoustic monitoring with echolocation data loggers including Cetacean Porpoise Detectors (CPODs) and recently Full Waveform Capture PODs (FPODs). Long term monitoring of year-round usage of Eagle Bay and Eagle River by Harbor Porpoise (deployments in Eagle River during open water season only due to instrument loss) is integral to inform MMPA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses, especially in light of changing climactic conditions (i.e., timing and extent of ice cover).

The efficacy of using passive acoustics to detect CIBW has been well demonstrated in studies of both captive and free-ranging whales (e.g., Castellote et al., 2009; O'Corry-Crowe et al., 2009, Small 2011). CPOD's and more recently, FPOD's also log Harbor Porpoise detections, but the Harbor Porpoise detections in Knik Arm appear to be different from detections in open water (fewer clicks with shorter duration encounters [JBER, unpublished data]) and are thus often missed or misclassified by post-processing detection algorithms. Additionally, CPOD's apparently do not detect Harbor Porpoise presence consistently, even when visually observed within close proximity to a properly functioning CPOD. In 2013, for instance, a Harbor Porpoise was observed visually at the edge of a group of CIBWs and within approximately 50 meters of a functioning CPOD. Surprisingly though, the CPOD did not detect the porpoise. In 2015, JBER deployed a series of six (6) CPODs in Eagle River within the first 4.2 km of the mouth. Given results from CIBW, it was expected that a Harbor Porpoise entering the river and swimming upriver would be detected at each of the successive stations as it progressed upriver and then again at each of the successive stations on its downstream return trip. What was observed, however, was that porpoise were detected at only 36.8% of the stations (21 detections out of 57 expected) during the course of an average round trip (n=12) in Eagle River (Garner, unpublished data). This somewhat surprising result could be due to porpoise acoustic biology such as the highly directional nature of the porpoise echolocation beam (i.e., the beam is not aimed at the instrument), the relatively low source level of porpoise echolocation, or the high frequency, narrowband echolocation signals (high frequency sounds attenuate more quickly than lower frequency sounds of the same amplitude). This unexpected lack of detections at stations that animals obviously had to cross in close proximity to (i.e., animals detected at upriver sites but not sites leading up to it) would also be explained by a silent, non-echolocating porpoise.

It is also possible that the instruments (CPODs) used to monitor were not fully effective at detecting Harbor Porpoise. Interestingly, a couple of recent studies have noted significantly lower porpoise detection rates with CPODs versus full-bandwidth recorders using external software for analysis. For instance, a comparison of the performance of CPOD and SoundTrap/PAMGuard in detection of Harbor Porpoise clicks found that the CPOD only detected 21-94% of the Harbor Porpoise click trains recorded by the SoundTrap and detected by PAMGuard (Sarnocinska et al. 2016). The authors reasoned that this was likely due to the differences in how the two (2) systems classify clicks; the CPOD (and associated software) classifies click trains rather than individual clicks and ignores trains below five (5) clicks long, whereas PAMGuard classifies individual clicks. Thus, a porpoise emitting short click trains, such as a travelling animal emitting intermittent ranging trains, might be missed altogether by a CPOD with a detection threshold of five (5) clicks. Similarly, Clausen et al. (2018), found that an SM2M+/PAMGuard combination detected significantly more porpoise clicks than a CPOD and that both systems experienced decreased detections with increasing noise in the bandwidth 20-160 kiloHertz (kHz) (especially for levels above 100 [decibel] dB re 1 microPascal [μ Pa] root-mean-square [rms]). While increasing noise

affected the detection efficiency of both loggers, the PAMGuard detection algorithms were the least sensitive to increasing ambient noise.

Previous efforts by JBER to utilize full bandwidth recorders to monitor porpoise were complicated by equipment failures and longer than forecasted analysis time due to high current noise. Additionally, Harbor Porpoise echolocate in the 120 -140 kHz bandwidth, which requires a sampling rate of 280 kHz to capture click trains from passing porpoise. Such a high sampling rate dramatically reduces available recording time. This, in turn, requires more frequent servicing than the current scheduling paradigm (having to account for both range and explosive ordnance disposal [EOD] schedule) can accommodate.

The CPOD is the predecessor of the new FPOD, which boasts a more sensitive hydrophone and an onboard click train detector that initiates full waveform recording of up to 21 cycles of candidate trains. This reportedly results in fewer missed detections than experienced with the CPOD with a drastically reduced analysis time as compared to traditional full bandwidth recorders. Additionally, FPOD's can be deployed using lithium batteries which allows an increase in continuous recording of at least 100% (8 + months). This will help ensure that data is gathered in the current challenging scheduling climate at JBER. Initial tests comparing FPOD's to CPOD's have been encouraging and, thus, JBER has decided to use FPODs to monitor Harbor Porpoise presence. CPOD's will also be deployed to maintain consistency with our long-term dataset. Using the same instrument from year to year allows for less biased trends analyses. Insertion of data gathered by a more sensitive instrument, for instance, could lead the analyst to attribute increased detections with increased beluga presence rather than to an increase in the ability to detect belugas.

1.3 Legal Drivers

All marine mammals are protected by provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(5)).

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Determine Harbor Porpoise presence in Knik Arm during the winter.

Objective 2: Determine the presence of Harbor Porpoise in Knik Arm and the timing and extent of upstream movement of Harbor Porpoise in the Eagle River during summer and fall.

3.0 MAJOR REQUIREMENTS AND TASKS

3.1 Task 1: Mgt, Species, Harbor Porpoise

Sub-task 1-1: Use static passive acoustic instruments to detect Harbor Porpoise presence during the frozen months when ice precludes access to Knik Arm by boat and winter firing into the ERF precludes access via land. This task relates to Objective 1.

Methods: The presence of Harbor Porpoise in Knik Arm will be logged/recorded using static passive acoustic monitoring in and near the mouth of Eagle River using a combination of CPODs (and FPODs) (at least one [1] each), manufactured by Chelonia Inc. CPOD data shall be gathered alongside FPOD data to maintain consistency with our long-term dataset. This location, at Eagle Bay, is the preferred location. If it cannot be set due to safety, training or some other legitimate reason, then instruments may be deployed near Sixmile Creek. Instruments can be deployed at both sites if feasible. The instruments shall be deployed within specially designed housings drilled into the mud or, in the case of Sixmile, in housings attached to rock, during an extreme low tide

event as late in the fall as possible. Also included at each station will be a water depth and temperature sensor (HOBO® and waterproof light intensity meter: Onset® Computer Corporation, MA, USA). Exact locations for acoustic instrumentation are to be determined (TBD) but will remain within Knik Arm/Eagle River.

Sub-task 1-2: Use static passive acoustic instruments to detect Harbor Porpoise presence in Knik Arm and at multiple locations within the tidally influenced portion of Eagle River during the open water season (typically May-Nov). This task relates to Objective 2.

Methods: Up to four (4) FPOD's and four (4) CPOD's (but at least three (3) each) shall be deployed along Eagle River downstream of Bravo Bridge. CPOD data shall be gathered alongside FPOD data to maintain consistency with our long-term dataset. The locations of the instrument package will be determined based on data from a previous acoustic monitoring study. The instrument location shall be geo-spatially recorded. Deployment shall begin as soon as the area is ice free in spring (or as soon, thereafter, as possible based on agreement award and equipment procurement) and will end before ice builds up in the fall. A combination of line, anchors, and steel weights will maintain the FPODs in position throughout the monitoring season (design supplied by JBER). Also included on the line at each station shall be a water depth and temperature sensor (HOBO®). Vessel-based semimonthly service will ensure the safety of these moorings as well as the retrieval of their data. Service shall be completed by the Recipient and JBER personnel using boats furnished by JBER. At least one (1) of the recipient personnel shall have experience working on boats in upper Cook Inlet and preferentially in Knik Arm. Recipient personnel shall be responsible for preparation of boats and equipment for fieldwork initiation as well as termination.

Monitoring Knik Arm during the open water season shall consist of FPOD deployment at the mouth of Eagle River in the silos used for winter monitoring. This location, at Eagle Bay, is the preferred location. If it cannot be set due to safety, training, or some other legitimate reason, then instruments may be deployed near Sixmile Creek. Instruments can be deployed at both sites if feasible.

4.0 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements are common to all tasks listed above and for all study years:

4.1 Recipient Employee Government Access Requirements

4.1.1 The Recipient shall comply with applicable installation, facility, and area commander installation/facility access and local security policies and procedures. The Recipient shall also provide all information required for background checks to meet installation access requirements to be accomplished by installation Provost Marshall Office, Director of Emergency services, and/or Security Office.

4.1.2 The Recipient shall ensure that its employees entering JBER installations or facilities have obtained access badges and passes, in accordance with facility regulations, and that these badges and passes are obtained in advance so as not to delay the accomplishment of services.

4.1.3 The Recipient shall return all issued U.S. Government Common Access Cards (CAC), installation badges, and/or access passes to the Government Representative when the cooperative agreement is completed or when a recipient employee no longer requires access to the installation or facility.

5.0 GOVERNMENT FURNISHED MATERIALS AND TRAINING

1. Military radios
2. Hip waders (one (1) pair per recipient personnel) and waterproof day pack (one (1) per recipient personnel)
3. Sampling equipment (e.g., binoculars, GPS, rite-in-rain notebooks, and paper, etc.)
4. Bear spray
5. Unexploded ordnance and range safety training
6. Unexploded ordnance clearance of trails through Eagle River Flats
7. Boat and captain (including fuel for boat)
8. CPODs (n=4), (FPOD (n=1), HOBO® water level logger (n=4), HOBO® Pendant 64K light intensity meters (n=2) and associated terminal gear

5.1 RECIPIENT FURNISHED MATERIALS AND TRAINING:

1. For Task 1 (Porpoise)
 - a. Two (n=2) FPOD (Chelonia Limited, UK)
 - b. One (n=1) rugged (stainless steel or heavy gauge aluminum) silos for housing FPOD
 - c. Two (n=2) HOBO® 100-foot depth water level data logger (Titanium)
 - d. Up to \$1000 in miscellaneous equipment and/or services coordinated with Federal Point of Contact (POC). If these funds are not used, the Recipient may reallocate part or all of this amount in coordination with the JBER POC (see Section 8).
 - e. First aid and bear safety training for all recipient personnel.
 - f. Any safety equipment or training required by the recipient to conduct this type of work and that is not provided by the Government.
 - g. One (1) four-wheel drive truck (n=1) (plus fuel- approximately 50 miles per week) with tow package (capability to tow 5000 lbs.). Needed for up to six (6) months (can be a lease). Recipient personnel must be able to drive this vehicle.

NOTE: all monitoring equipment (e.g., FPODs, HOBO® 's, etc.) purchased under this CA shall become property of the Government at the end of the period of performance, unless otherwise negotiated with the JBER POC (see Section 8).

6.0 DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

6.1 Deliverables for all tasks are summarized below. (NOTE: all data gathered during the course of this project are owned by the Department of Defense (DoD) and may not be retained or used by the Recipient without express permission from the JBER POCs). See Section 8 for contact information. ***NOTE: A copy of all deliverables (with the exception of raw data) shall be provided to the Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC) POC. See end of Section 8 for contact information.***

Deliverable 1: Work Plan(s): The work plan(s) shall be written in collaboration with the Federal POCs and will detail methods and recommended field schedule. This can be a combined plan for all three (3) tasks, or each task can have a separate plan.

Deliverable 2: Data from each task (i.e., acoustic) and any associated field survey and geospatial data. These data shall be housed on two (2) external hard drives (one (1) as a back-up). Delivery date for data from each task will depend on when the season ends per task.

- Acoustic (.CP1/.FP1 files) and depth/temperature (.hobo files) data downloaded from CPOD/FPOD /HOBO® that overwintered in Eagle River/Knik Arm, in addition to acoustic and depth/temperature data from CPOD/FPOD/HOBO® deployed in Eagle River during the spring to fall. This data shall be housed on two (2) external hard drives (one (1) as a back-up).

Deliverable 3: Field Report: This report shall be written in collaboration with the Federal POC and shall include a summary of the field work, maps of instrument locations, representative site photos, and recommendations for future field efforts. Further details on report components shall be discussed and agreed upon during the kick-off meeting. Delivery date for the report from each task will depend on when the season ends. A draft report shall be delivered to the JBER Technical POC no later than (NLT) 30 calendar days after the end of the season for each task with a final report due NLT 30 calendar days after receipt of comments from the JBER Technical POC.

6.2 The following table describes a generalized project schedule with milestones. Note that this is an estimated schedule. The unpredictable nature of Alaskan maritime field work requires that Recipient be somewhat adaptable as the natural world outside of the office setting does not conform to rigid time schedules. The Recipient project manager will notify the USACE of delays expected to push back any field work and/or deliverable deadlines by more than 45 calendar days.

Milestone #	Description	General Timeframe
1	Kick-off meeting (can be teleconference)	NLT 30 calendar days after agreement award
2	Present Draft Work Plan(s) (Deliverable 1)	NLT 30 calendar days after kick-off meeting
3	Present Final Work Plan(s) (Deliverable 1)	NLT 45 calendar days prior to initiation of field work
4	Deploy PODs (FPOD and CPOD) in Eagle River (if funding early enough)	TBD - depends on spring ice, tides, daylight, weather, and military range/EOD schedule (estimated spring 2025)
5	Deploy PODs for overwinter	TBD - depends on fall ice, tides, daylight, weather, and military schedule (estimated late Sep – Oct 2024)
6	Service PODs in river	Sept – Dec 2024 (depending on ice) and again April or May – Sept 2025
7	Deliver acoustic/depth data (Deliverable 2)	End of field season for each task – exact date will depend on conditions to include ice development and military training (i.e., artillery and mortar training in ERF in late fall/early winter precludes further work). In general, photo and acoustic data from the winter should be delivered by the end of June and acoustic data from the open water season should be delivered by the middle of December.

Milestone #	Description	General Timeframe
8	Retrieve winter instruments and deploy CPOD/FPOD in river	April – June 2025 - depends on ice and military schedule
9	Present Draft Field Report(s) (Deliverable 3)	30 calendar days after end of field season
10	Present Final Field Report(s) (Deliverable 3)	30 calendar days after receipt of comments from JBER Technical POC

7.0 OPTION PERIODS

There are no option periods.

8.0 POINT OF CONTACTS (POCs)

The Recipient shall coordinate with the JBER Technical POCs listed below and provide quarterly progress reports and final report to the JBER Technical POCs and the USACE Project Manager. The POC for USACE Project Management is Katie Russell. Cooperative agreement questions should be addressed to the Grants Officer, Tammy Davis. Correspondence should be addressed as follows:

USACE POCs:

Katie Russell
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Environmental and Special Projects Branch
ATTN: CEPOA-PME
P.O. Box 6898
JBER, AK 99506-0898
Phone: (907) 753-2535
Email: kathryn.russell@usace.army.mil

Tammy Davis
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Contracting Division
ATTN: CEPOA-CT
P.O. Box 6898
JBER, AK 99506-0898
Phone: (907) 753-5592
Email: tammy.davis@usace.army.mil

The JBER Technical POC is:

Mr. Christopher Garner
Biologist
673 CES/CEIEC
Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER)
Phone: (907) 602-0860 (cell)
Email: christopher.garner.9@us.af.mil

The AFCEC POC (for delivery of copy of deliverables):

Ms. Kristy Rouse
AFCEC CZOP/ISS

Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER)
Phone: (907) 552-7910
Email: kristy.craig@us.af.mil

9.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance is 18 months from date of award.

10.0 LITERATURE CITED:

Castellote, M., Tregenza, N., Leeney, R., J.A. Esteban, O'Corry-Crowe, G., Lucey, B., Stafford, K., Kovacs, K. M. Lydersen, C., Lauhakangas, R., Krasnova, V., Chernetsky, A., Agafonov, A. and V. Belkovich. 2009. Habitat use of beluga whales revealed by acoustic loggers. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 125:2548 (abstract).

Clausen, K.T., Tougaard, J., Carstensen, J., Delefosse, M., & J. Teilmann (2018): Noise affects porpoise click detections – the magnitude of the effect depends on logger type and detection filter settings, *Bioacoustics*, DOI: 10.1080/09524622.2018.1477071

Goetz, K. T., P. W. Robinson, R. C. Hobbs, K. L. Laidre, L. A. Huckstadt, and K. E. W. Shelden. 2012. Movement and dive behavior of beluga whales in Cook Inlet, Alaska. AFSC Processed Rep. 2012-03, 40 p. Alaska Fish. Sci. Cent., NOAA, Natl. Mar. Fish. Serv., 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle WA 98115.

O'Corry-Crowe, G., Lucey, W., Castellote, M. and K. Stafford. 2009. Abundance, habitat use and behavior of beluga whales in Yakutat bay, May 2008; as revealed by passive acoustic monitoring, visual observations and photo-id. Final Report to Protected Resources Division, Alaska Regional Office. National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Juneau, Alaska. March 2009.

Mulherin, N.D., W.B. Tucker III, O.P. Smith and W. J. Lee,. 2001. Marine ice atlas for Cook Inlet, Alaska. U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Engineer Research and Development Center, Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory ERD/CRREL TR-01-10.

Sarnocinska J, Tougaard J, Johnson, M, Madsen PT, Wahlberg M. 2016. Comparing the performance of C-PODs and SoundTrap/PAMGUARD in detecting the acoustic activity of harbor porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*). *Proceedings of Meetings on Acoustics*, Vol 27, 70013 (2016)

Small, R. J. 2011. ADF&G final report for "Acoustic Monitoring of Beluga Whales and Noise in Cook Inlet; NMFS Grant Number NA07NMF4390364.

Suydam, R.S., L.F. Lowry, K.J. Frost, G.M. O'Corry-Crowe and D. Pikok. 2001. Satellite Tracking of Eastern Chukchi Sea Beluga Whales into the Arctic Ocean. *Arctic* 54:237-243.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). 2019. Climate Impacts in Alaska. Website: https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-alaska_.html. Accessed on 20 March, 2019.

Section II: Award Information

This Funding Opportunity Announcement is for a competed cooperative agreement. The period of performance is 18 months from date of award. The total Project Cost Ceiling is \$77,000.00. The Government will have substantive involvement throughout the execution of this requirement.

Announcement Issue Date: 23 July 2024

Application Due Date: 23 August 2024

Estimated Award Date: On or About 3 September 2024

Section III: Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants – Open to all that meet the criteria of this announcement. Award shall be limited to States, local governments, Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations, and individuals, pursuant to the authority of 16 U.S.C. 670c-1(a).
2. Cost Sharing – This action will be 100% funded by USACE.
3. Other Information – None noted.

Section IV: Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package:

The complete Funding Opportunity Announcement, application forms, and instructions are available for download at Grants.gov. USACE is not responsible for any loss of internet connectivity or for an applicant's inability to access documents posted at the referenced website.

The administrative point of contact is the Grants Specialist, Casandra Hutchins, casandra.a.hutchins@usace.army.mil.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

All mandatory forms and any applicable optional forms must be completed in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below.

- a. SF 424 - Application for Federal Assistance
- b. SF 424 A – Budget Information for Non-construction Programs
- c. SF 424 B – Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
- d. Program Narrative – Brief program description illustrating applicant's ability to meet the goals and objectives described in Section VI Scope of Work of this announcement.

3. Application shall be submitted **NO LATER THAN 23 August 2024; 2:00 PM (Alaska Time)** via email or through Grants.gov.

4. Submission Instructions

Applications may be submitted by email or via the internet through Grants.gov. Choose ONE (1) of the following submission methods:

Via Email: Format all documents to print on Letter (8 ½ x 11") paper. E-mail proposal to the Grants Specialist, Casandra Hutchins, at casandra.a.hutchins@usace.army.mil.

Via Grants.gov: Applicants are not required to submit proposals through Grants.gov. However, if applications are submitted via the internet, applicants are responsible for ensuring that their Grants.gov proposal submission is received in its entirety and within the date and time required. The Government bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission of conversion processes associated with electronic submissions. The Government will bear no responsibility for delays in submissions due to technical difficulties at or with the Grants.gov website. All applicants choosing to use Grants.gov to submit proposals must be registered and have an account with Grants.gov. ***It may take up to three (3) weeks to complete Grants.gov registration.*** For more information on registration, go to <http://www.grants.gov/ForApplicants>.

Section V: Application Review Information

Offer Submission Evaluation Criteria and Basis of Award

Management, Species, Harbor Porpoise, (RAM#FXSBA53247215-A)

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska July 2024

The Government will evaluate technical submissions in accordance with the criteria described herein and award a cooperative agreement to the responsible offeror whose submission is determined to represent the best overall value to the Government. The Government will not award a cooperative agreement to an offeror whose submission contains a deficiency.

The evaluation factors for this action are:

- Factor 1: Experience (most important technical factor)
- Factor 2: Technical Approach (2nd most important technical factor)
- Factor 3: Cost (3rd most important factor)

After listing submission strengths, weaknesses and deficiencies, the Government will assign an adjective rating of Outstanding, Good, Acceptable, Marginal, or Unacceptable to each technical factor which reflects the Government's confidence in each offeror's ability, as demonstrated in its submission, to perform the requirements stated in the Statement of Work (SOW). The adjectival ratings shall be assigned, using the following criteria, which incorporate a submission risk assessment:

Adjectival Rating	Description
Outstanding	Submission indicates an exceptional approach and understanding of the requirements and contains multiple strengths.
Good	Submission indicates a thorough approach and understanding of the requirements and contains at least one (1) strength.
Acceptable	Submission indicates an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements.
Marginal	Submission has not demonstrated an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements or contains an element of risk.
Unacceptable	Submission does not meet requirements of the solicitation and, thus, contains one (1) or more deficiencies and is unawardable.

OFFER EVALUATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Each offeror shall be evaluated in accordance with the selection criteria below. The selection criteria are listed in descending order of importance.

Factor 1 Experience

The offeror shall demonstrate prior project experience relevant to the attached SOW, completed within the last five (5) years of this Funding Opportunity Announcement, and other qualifications and technical competence in all of the following areas:

1. Experience deploying and servicing passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) systems. Offeror(s) may receive greater consideration for previous experience deploying and servicing PAM in a tidally influenced river system, especially river systems within Cook Inlet.
2. Experience working on small boats in an extreme marine environment (e.g., huge tidal variation, turbid water, shallow water with shifting channels, cold water, large standing waves, bore tide, heavy currents, moving ice pans, potential ice entrapment in fall). Offeror(s) may receive greater consideration for previous experience working in Cook Inlet, particularly in Knik Arm.
3. Experience working around marine mammals and endangered marine mammals. Offeror(s) may receive greater consideration for previous experience working around Harbor Porpoise and Cook Inlet Beluga Whales.
4. Experience conducting visual observation of marine mammals. Offeror(s) may receive greater consideration for previous experience conducting visual observations of Harbor Porpoise behavior, composition and numbers, especially in Knik Arm.
5. Experience working with Department of Defense (DoD). Offeror(s) may receive greater consideration for previous experience working on JBER.
6. Experience working around unexploded ordnance. Offeror(s) may receive greater consideration for previous experience working in active impact area(s).

The offeror shall provide examples of up to four (4) past projects of similar size, scope and complexity that best demonstrate the above qualifications. Submit projects that are at least 50% complete or were completed within the past five (5) years. The example project summaries shall be limited to one (1) page each. The example project summaries shall identify:

- Title/Subject
- Location
- Duration
- Brief description
- Roles and work self-performed
- Date project began and if completed
- Complexities or key accomplishments
- Client contact information

The Government will utilize the example project summaries to evaluate the capability and experience as a basis for comparing offerors to determine best value.

Factor 2 Technical Approach

The offeror shall provide a brief narrative of their technical approach and a milestone schedule. The narrative shall be no more than two (2) pages per main task and must include:

- A discussion of the technical approach to accomplish the SOW requirements.
- A discussion of the quality assurance, quality control, and other technical activities that will be implemented to ensure that quality data are collected to support project data quality objectives.
- A discussion of applicable regulatory requirements and how project requirements will be implemented.
- A discussion of all assumptions. The inclusion of numerous assumptions that significantly “assume away” offeror risk regarding major issues or problems that may be encountered on the project will be considered unacceptable.

The offeror shall also provide an organizational chart with the proposed project team with defined roles, responsibilities, and lines of communication for all key personnel and sub-recipients. The Government will review, evaluate, and compare the technical approach documentation received from each offeror to determine best value.

Factor 3 Cost

Provide proposed cost to the Government for the 18-month period of performance as this data must be reviewed and evaluated to aid in determining fairness, reasonableness, and best value. In accordance with Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, non-Federal entities may not earn or keep any profit (or comparable fees) resulting from Federal Financial Assistance actions. Therefore, any offers that contain profit and/or fees will be excluded from consideration because the government cannot compensate for profit or fees on Federal Financial Assistance awards (i.e., Grants and Cooperative Agreements).

Cost is considered less important than non-cost factors and will be evaluated for fairness and reasonableness, per OMB cost principles. If more than one (1) offer is rated as having equal non-cost factors, the lowest cost tender of the offers received would be granted as the preferred tender unless there are extraordinary reasons for not doing so.

Section VI: Award Administration Information

Reserved.

Section VII: Agency Contacts

Reserved.

Section VIII: Other Information

Reserved.

All questions or inquiries regarding this Funding Opportunity Announcement shall be directed to the agency contact(s) noted in Section IV.